ESSAY

ON THE

PUBLIC MERITS

OF

Mr. PITT.

BY

THOMAS BEDDOES, M. D.

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TO THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS;

AN ASSEMBLY,

WHOSE ACTS FOR THE LAST XX YEARS

NO MAN

WHO FEELS FOR

ASIA, AFRICA, AMERICA,

OR

EU·ROPE,

CAN REGARD

WITHOUT THE PROFOUNDEST EMOTIONS:

THIS ESSAY

IS INSCRIBED,

BY THE

AUTHOR.

BRITISH MUSEUM

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Ne ſutor ultra crepidam.

Penned be each pig within his proper ſty;
Nor into ſtate concerns let Doctors pry.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

ESSAY

ON

A FAVOURITE STATESMAN.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory.

DURING the pendency of Mr. Pitt's and Lord Grenville's reſtrictive bills, I attended the ſittings of a committee appointed to tranſact ſome buſineſs preparatory to a general meeting of the inhabitants of Briſtol. There are periods when the public mind is under ſuch diſcipline that no man may ſtir a ſtep in oppoſition to a miniſter without obloquy. My movements were not ſecret; nor did they paſs unnoticed. A friendly lady, herſelf perhaps ſcandalized at the indecorum or imprudence of my proceeding, repeated to me ſome of the cenſures of which I had been the ſubject. "So Dr. B. was at "a meeting of this committee laſt night!

"Bleſs me, ſuppoſe he had been ſuddenly "wanted. The poor patient might have "periſhed before he could have been called. "I wonder what a phyſician has to do with "politics!" Theſe reflections have no great peculiarity of ſtyle or conception. Polite converſation has not degenerated ſince the days of SWIFT.

Againſt the individual I leave ſentence to ſtand as it was pronounced. I mean to offer nothing in mitigation. But ſuch language, as it tends to deter one claſs from the exerciſe of a common privilege, ſhould not paſs without examination. It is current, and has probably the ſtamp of general approbation. Nevertheleſs it appears to involve a ſlight inconſiſtency and a miſtake, by no means harmleſs in its conſequences. When a phyſician's attendance is unexpectedly deſired, if he be found bearing a hand at whiſt or partaking of a turtle, he will incur no reproach. Abſence on account of pleaſure or private buſineſs is not imputed to him as a deſertion of his poſt. The world can pardon all but interference in public concerns. The world is very candid: but is it conſiſtent?

If a ſuppoſition, fatal to the moſt helpleſs portion of mankind, can be ſhewn to ſtand implied in theſe cenſures, they will not, I am ſure, be uttered with ſuch flippancy nor heard with ſo much complacency. Now that much more miſery exiſts in his neighbourhood than he could wiſh, every man, whereſoever his

his habitation may be fixed, will acknowledge. A large portion of human miſery paſſes under cloſe medical inſpection. Among its poſſible cauſes may not ſome be political? Has the folly, the neglect or the abuſe of a regulation of law never occaſioned any ſenſitive and rational being a pang? If there be ordinances in exiſtence which operate to the production of diſeaſe, and ordinances in poſſibility by which diſeaſe would be prevented, we have juſt ſo many inſtances of political information thrown in a phyſician's way during the diſcharge of his daily functions.

It is evident that medical knowledge comprizes the powers that produce good or evil. For what are temporal good and evil but the ſum of painful and pleaſurable ſenſations felt during life? Political knowledge is no other than the knowledge of inſtitutions, productive of good and evil. Nor is it poſſible to promote the welfare of thoſe collections of individuals, which we denominate *nations*, without underſtanding what things affect *man* painfully and what pleaſurably.

The analogy of theſe two vocations extends to abuſes. A crafty phyſician takes advantage of his ſuppoſed ſkill to avert pain and death in order to amaſs wealth. This is his ruling purpoſe. In like manner a crafty politician takes advantage of his ſuppoſed ſkill to promote the welfare of nations in order to acquire the power of indulging his freaks. This is his ſole object. If he beſtow

emoluments on relations and dependants inſtead of accumulating himſelf, he is actuated partly by pride and partly by that diſpoſition, which the artiſt, the player, and the proſtitute, as well as the politician of this ſpurious brood, acquire from their uncertain favour and irregular gains. Other ſpendthrifts loſe the eſteem of ſociety; but the politician may unite extravagance and rapacity without infamy. Mr. —— is accounted generous, becauſe in the ſpirit of Cataline, he cares not how he waſtes the profit of places which he gets he cares not how.

In the courſe of his reading, as well as in the exerciſe of his profeſſion the phyſician meets with political information which eſcapes every body elſe. The following characteriſtic anecdote is of this kind.—In 1773 a French chemiſt concluded from certain experiments that the marine acid has the power of deſtroying contagion. Of this diſcovery advantage was taken by the perſons exerciſing the powers of government in France; and inſtructions were iſſued enjoining the uſe of the marine acid in the military hoſpitals of the republic. In 1780 an Engliſh phyſician verified and extended the obſervations of the French chemiſt. This phyſician was employed by adminiſtration. He is a friend of Mr. Henry Dundas, whom we all know to have been in office at the time when theſe important facts are ſaid to have been aſcertained. The work, in which he has deſcribed the fever that raged among the Spaniſh

Spaniſh priſoners at Wincheſter, is dedicated to Mr. Dundas. It is dedicated to him as the zealous friend of the "brave defenders "of our king and country," the author in the ſame or the next breath abjuring flattery. Has Mr. Dundas occaſioned the *diſinfecting* power of the marine and the nitrous acids to be tried in our iſlands, fleets, and armies, in ſome of which the moſt deſtructive fever upon record, except the plague and the ſweating ſickneſs, has been raging upwards of two years? I believe not. The facts obſerved by Dr. John Carmichael Smith he muſt have known; but they probably ſlipped his memory! They were not made public till the year 1795 was far advanced; and then only in conſequence of ſolicitations from a Dr. Morris, who had under his care troops, among whom a contagious fever was raging. Acid liquors and acid vapours have been employed time immemorial againſt infection. In queſtions merely chemical, no authority can be higher than that of Mr. Morveau of Dijon, who recommended the marine acid. If his method be effectual, the French government muſt have ſaved many thouſand lives by its adoption; and Mr. Dundas ſeems to have loſt an opportunity of eſtabliſhing a better claim to the dedicatory compliments of Dr. Smyth than he can at preſent make good.

If ſo plain a truth required confirmation, I ſhould find it in the reaſon why *a technical lawyer always makes a bad politician.* But no man,

man, who ſurveys his fellows with kindneſs, will believe the practitioner of medicine, if he had no peculiar ſource of political intelligence, diſqualified by education or habit for diſcerning what belongs to their ſocial, any more than to their individual, welfare. Could a people be inſpected, family by family or ſoul by ſoul, ſo that the exact condition of each as to ſuffering and enjoyment might be aſcertained, we ſhould be in poſſeſſion of juſt half the deſirable ſum of political information. The means of removing ſuffering and enhancing enjoyment conſtitute the other half. But the mere numeration of individuals having never yet been effected in any large country, I deſpair of ſeeing a fair and exact perſonal ſcrutiny. Meanwhile, opinion will outſtrip knowledge on this ſubject as it has done on all others. Minds untutored and undepraved, will be melted by ſympathy; the ſelfiſh will utter what intereſt dictates; pride will ſpeak in this tone; ſervility in that; vengeance in another: and the language, ſuggeſted by a deliberate compariſon of the capacity of human nature with the happineſs actually attained by *all* and *ſingular* the members of any community, will be different ſtill.

The common concerns of mankind, reſpecting which a juſt regard for ourſelves or for others requires that we ſhould be anxious, are not numerous, nor, I think, extremely difficult to determine. The following interrogatories appear to me the moſt eſſential for a reaſonable political catechiſm.

How

How far am I ſecure againſt falſe alarms, fraud, and violence?

Do circumſtances which I cannot controul threaten deprivation of the accommodations and neceſſaries of life?

Do unjuſt laws, encroachments on freedom by perſons in power, or other public impediments prevent my hands from executing what my head has innocently deviſed?

Is the diſtinguiſhing bounty of nature to man fruſtrated by infringements on the privilege of ſpeech?

Are the contributions of the people faithfully applied to the public ſervice?

Do the fruits of my induſtry or poſſeſſions go to delude the weak, bribe the corrupt, and ſlaughter the innocent?

What ſhare of the bleſſings of nature do my countrymen at large enjoy?

Are their ſufferings on the increaſe or decline?

Are intoxication and the groſſer vices on the wane? In charity of thought and action are they ſuperior to their predeceſſors?

Do the leſs inſtructed begin to diſtinguiſh their preſervers from their deſtroyers? or are they ſtill ready, at the beck of a miniſter, to bawl for a war, and light bonfires for victories which will bring the rot of famine upon all the human creatures that have the misfortune to belong to them?

What are the cauſes of the growing happineſs or miſery, improvement or degeneracy of the community?

Such

Such are the grand objects towards which curiosity is directed by prudence and humanity. And what objects stand more exposed to observation? The state of sensitive beings as to their sensations, of rational beings as to their degree of mental cultivation, is ascertainable by an easy examination. Of all enquiries the former is that to which our faculties are best adapted and our motives the most urgent. Each man's feelings furnish an infallible standard. We all know what it is to be cold, hungry, and diseased. Nor does any thing fill us with such sincere compassion for ourselves as the prospect of hunger without food, cold without cloaths, or disease without a remedy. Those statesmen who refer to circumstances, incident to a part of the community as tests of the political condition of the whole, try to confound the undiscerning, that they may escape the detection of their own incapacity of guilt. The attempt, it must however be acknowledged, has hitherto been crowned with constant success. The tub has proved a diversion to the whale. Instead of being regulated by a severe comparison of its tendency with the general welfare, the conduct of the ambitious has overruled the understanding of mankind. Splendid illusions render us traitors to ourselves and to the objects of our fondest affection. Force and fraud, operating upon a large scale, even though they operate to the production of pure misery, carry away the imagination captive. The majority of human minds

minds have in all ages crouched before the majeſtic ideas of battles won and territories acquired. When politicians of mere ſtratagem ſucceſsfully adapt their means to their end, they ſecure our applauſe, like jugglers who go through their deceptions with dexterity. We are not ſcrupulous either as to the means or the end. I have known more than one ingenuous reader of Dr. Robertſon affected with ſorrow, becauſe the villain MURRAY did not finally ſucceed in his enterprizes. Hiſtory and poetry, which have ſo much influence in adjuſting our ſentiments, ſcarce ever delight in holding up to emulative admiration thoſe by whoſe labours the hourly wants of life are ſupplied, or its incidental calamities alleviated. In a mixed company name the authors of uſeful inventions, from the art of printing downwards, and you will be told, "WOLFE we know "and RODNEY we know, but who are theſe?" To be in credit with your ſpecies, aſtoniſh or amuſe the fancy; do any thing but ſuch good as comes home to men's own feelings. See how Weſtminſter Abbey ſwarms with monuments of warriors, fine writers, painters, orators, architects, muſicians! HOWARD himſelf would never perhaps have been thought to deſerve a ſtatue, if his humanity had not been thrown into relief by his daring ſpirit of adventure. Our own age and country produced another philanthropiſt whoſe ſervices to the race of man, at the loweſt computation, equal thoſe of HOWARD. But he

was retired and illiterate and unarrayed in that gaudy plumage, by which the eye of imagination is faſcinated. He diſcovered, and with diſintereſted benevolence he communicated, the means of aſſuaging ſuch anguiſh as in all ages had driven multitudes to invoke death in their deſpair. The diſcovery became a matter of notoriety: it will bring relief to affliction as long as human nature ſhall be ſubject to its preſent infirmities. But public enthuſiaſm was never excited by his name. BENJAMIN COLBORNE lived unhonoured and died unlamented.

The ſage of antiquity therefore who recommended to us acquaintance with ourſelves, might alſo with propriety have recommended careful enquiry reſpecting the influence of others on our happineſs. Of the latter ſtudy the world probably needs to be put in mind as much as of the former. You may be preſent at five hundred diſcuſſions of a miniſter's management without hearing a ſingle reference to this principle, *that profitable knowledge of human affairs is only to be acquired by tracing the effect of meaſures through all the claſſes of ſociety.*

Looking to the daily condition of common life as the great political barometer, I am little anxious about minute information which depends on the accidental diſcloſure of ſecret intrigues. The vengeance of a monarch is rouſed—ſlaughter rages—thouſands are decoyed, and thouſands thruſt, into a premature grave. The man who feels for mankind would

would know the quantity of evil perpetrated, and the quantity of good which the labour, miſemployed in deſtruction, might have compaſſed.* The ſum of poſitive and negative miſchief being aſcertained, it imports him little along which dark paſſage of the palace the courtier, that excited the baleful paſſion, felt his way.——Imagine a plot for conciliating deſpotiſm with repreſentative forms. By what arts were the people to be cajoled? By what ſnares the defenders of freedom to be circumvented? What ſhare in the deſign was allotted to fraud, and what to oppreſſion? This being ſhewn, the enquirer may reſt ſatisfied though he ſhould be ignorant at what hour in the evening the principal agent ſtole from Audley-ſtreet through Sackville-ſtreet to the place of aſſignation, and whether the chair in which he was conveyed had or had not its curtains cloſely drawn.

To determine in what ſpirit meaſures originate may be at all times deſirable; and in the preſent temper of mankind it is eſſential. For we deal with our rulers juſt as with our companions. The ſallies of theſe we encourage or repreſs according to their current repute for wit; and of every public propoſal we ſpeak in conformity with our pre-conceived opinion of him who propoſes it. As long as

* One of our moſt celebrated natural philoſophers computes that the ſum expended on a late war, would have been ſufficient to join England to Ireland by a mole a quarter of a mile in breadth.

this groſs faſhion of admitting vague preſumptions for ſpecial evidence ſhall prevail, the invidious taſk of ſcrutinizing motives and prying into the heart ought not to be ſhunned. By the help of circumſtances we every day obſerve perſons of ordinary capacity detecting concealed deſigns. And though one detached action may be of queſtionable character, where we have a ſeries, motives may generally be aſcertained with indubitable preciſion. One action will correct the erroneous inference that may be drawn from another; and certain conſpicuous parts of conduct will always refuſe to enter into the rank aſſigned to the reſt, provided it be much too high or too low. For ſuch moral analyſis, common ſenſe will ſuffice. Avoiding cynical ſcepticiſm, and its oppoſite, romantic credulity, we ſhall find a ſafe guide in our conſciouſneſs confirmed by obſervation of the inducements that prevail with others.

From ambiguous premiſes I would draw no poſitive concluſion. But there is a rule, which in my opinion ought always to be held in remembrance, when political actors are in contemplation. Though harſh of enunciation, it ſeems neceſſary for the protection of ſociety againſt the moſt pernicious ſpecies of impoſture. *Let your interpretation of all inconcluſive evidence be rather unfavourable.* The effect of ambition is proclaimed by every page of hiſtory. In purſuit of power, morality is trampled under foot; and by its poſſeſſor the blood of common men is conſidered but as

as the water which the engineer diſcharges to ſet his machinery in motion.

In judging of the powerful there is a frequent cauſe of error, which I ſhall notice, though I have no reaſon for dreading its influence on the particular ſubject I have undertaken. *Pity is ſometimes ſeen to take them by ſurprize, and credit is immediately given them for habitual equity of mind, and even for kindneſs of heart.* Had our firſt MARY met with a group of dogs, ſnuffing to the entrails of an infant, over whoſe body a wheel had juſt paſt, muſt ſhe not have been ſhocked at the ſpectacle? But, in ſpite of a ſudden guſt of compaſſion, would ſhe not have continued the bigotted and bloody Mary? Emotions at the ſight of miſery ought by no means to be received as evidence deciſive of character, though by the indiſcriminating ſuch emotions are perpetually miſtaken for virtue in themſelves and in others.

The paſſions that are excited by ſtruggles to obtain and preſerve high offices have this remarkable property. The oftener they are kindled, the more do they bring the heart towards the rigid temper of ſelfiſhneſs. Ambitious competition poſſeſſes a power of tranſmutation the reverſe of that which the fable aſcribes to Circe. Thoſe upon whom it operates retain the human form, but loſe the human affections. This fact admits an eaſy explanation. *Precarious* authority has a ſpecific tendency to deprave thoſe by whom it is held. The very uncertainty of the tenure engen-

engenders a ſpirit of jealous cruelty, to which the monarch with undiſputed title, and the juror whoſe right to award life or death terminates with his verdict, are alike ſtrangers. Many a miniſter, in danger of loſing his place, would ſacrifice half mankind to his ferocious fears; and it appears certain that tranſient gleams of benevolence have far more frequently viſited the minds of ſovereigns than of their delegates.

Time has put us in poſſeſſion of the ſecret hiſtory of many French and Engliſh candidates for rule. The majority appear to have been in the habitual practice of the loweſt frauds of ſwindling; and againſt thoſe, who are reputed leaſt to have perſonated a part before the people, there lie ſuch charges of occaſional duplicity, as would render a private man infamous as long as he ſhould be remembered. A friendly biographer makes our famous "Secretary, whom modern degeneracy never reached" reſort to prevarication and concealment in a ſingle negotiation. He firſt proteſts "that he will enter into no con-" tinental connections nor make a ſubſidiary "treaty with any European power." He next declares his reſolution to maintain an alliance with the king of Pruſſia, and goes to a confidential conference for the expreſs purpoſe of hiding his engagement with the court. (*Anecdotes of Lord Chatham, chapter* XXXII.)

In

In countries, ſufficiently free, virtuous, and enlightened for the public voice to bear cenſorial authority, all theſe men muſt bear kept up appearances. Had they popularly ranked with ſharpers and pick-pockets, their infamy could hardly fail to have been an inſuperable obſtacle to their ambition. Some among the number doubtleſs paſſed for perſons of nice morality and ſterling worth; and were even imagined by the people to feel a tender intereſt in their domeſtic comfort—a ſuppoſition, which ſhews what credit is at any time due to vulgar confidence in the miniſter of the day!

Fatal miſconceptions would I think have been ſometimes prevented, if the ſages, who have laboured to acquire deep inſight into the cauſes that actuate at once the whole maſs and each particle of ſociety, had not ſo generally waſted their wiſdom on the dead. To perceive the tendency of paſſing events and be acquainted with the views of living agents is undoubtedly of more conſequence than the moſt minute acquaintance with the tranſactions of all paſt ages. In devoting his faculties to the latter inveſtigation, he that is competent to the former, acts like the learned phyſician of the laſt century, who when the peſtilence was raging round him, abandoned his neighbours to their fate, and occupied himſelf in computing how many ſouls periſhed from ignorance of the nature of the diſeaſe, during the plague at Athens.

To attempt the appreciation of a bad man's character during his continuance in office ſeems to me like engaging in one of thoſe adventures of romance, where more courage is required to face the monſter's exterior defences than ſtrength to drag him into day. Ten thouſand clamorous mouths ſtand ready open to bay you into ſilence; and by way of anſwer, the charge of party-ſpirit or malignity will reſound through every village of the kingdom. To decline imputations ſo odious has probably been one motive with ſincere and diſcerning writers for dedicating their talents to remote events. That province of enquiry however which they have relinquiſhed to dullneſs and venality appears to border more cloſely than any other upon public utility. We can eaſily imagine a miniſter callous enough to ſneer at the idea of poſthumous infamy. But HISTORY might acquire ſome check over his conduct, if inſtead of threatening his *memory* with juſtice, ſhe were to erect her tribunal before his eyes, and to pronounce her ſentence in his hearing. The ſuggeſtions of conſcience, ſeconded by her voice, might occaſionally controul the moſt hardened; and—what would afford effectual ſecurity to mankind—the hope of ſeducing public opinion would be cut off from the moſt artful.

To thoſe who in a ſerious diſquiſition require ſuch management as produces dramatic ſurpriſe, many of theſe preliminary reflections will appear offenſively inartificial.

But

But I rely on the cogency of my proofs, and though my preſent expectations of proſelytes are very humble, I deſire to rouſe the vigilance of my reader. Inſtant conviction may ſtrike a few minds, but theſe muſt be minds pure for the admiſſion of truth, incapable of being perplexed by thoſe aſſociations that confound the vulgar, and indifferent whether an individual bear the name of WILLIAM PITT or JONATHAN POOLE.

CHAPTER II.

Of the period before that at which the hero of this Eſſay emerged into notice.

Delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.

War's deſperate game, ſecure, the Great can play,
The ſtake the people, ſtarved and bleeding, pay.

FOR upwards of thirty years violent fluctuations of opinion have agitated Great Britain, though they have not been the ſole diſtinction of this melancholy period. If we look back, we ſhall find the people at one time greedily feeding on unſubſtantial hope, and ſhortly afterwards chewing the bitter cud of deſerved diſappointment. This moment the age will remind its hiſtorian of a ſtripling, from whom the painful conſequences of indiſcretion are extorting virtuous reſolutions, and who, the next, is rioting in vicious indulgences, as if he had never ſmarted for his folly.

During the firſt years of this eventful term, diſcontent was loud and diſſention virulent at home. But a more ſerious ſtruggle was deſtined to ſuperſede the ſenſe of domeſtic agi-

agitation. The mandate for burning, killing, and deſtroying in our tranſlantic colonies was at length iſſued, though not before the public mind had been worked up to ſanguinary fury againſt their inhabitants.—Nothing leſs than hunting down the rebels would ſatisfy our more impetuous patriots; the ſport, they expected, would not be more hazardous; and for a people, reſolute to brave the worſt rather than lie within the gripe of a junto they could not truſt, loyal moderation had no tenderer terms to ſpare than *his majeſty's deluded ſubjects in America.* His majeſty it is true had deluded ſubjects in plenty. But moſt of thoſe who were deluded either as to the iſſue of that conteſt or the judgment of mankind, happened to be elſewhere, not in America.

Actual trial having taught both combatants and ſpectators on which ſide the deluſion lay, murmurs began to riſe againſt the raſhneſs of the undertaking; ſwarms of *prophets after the event* lifted their voices in conjunction with thoſe who had foreboded Old England ill-luck from the beginning. Repentance was ſoon more general than animoſity had originally been. The buſineſs of bloodſhed went on notwithſtanding. Our gallant American ſecretary did not ceaſe to ſhout acroſs the Atlantic:

"Fight on, my merry men all."

They fought on accordingly, till they were almoſt all maimed, taken priſoners, or killed

off. They could then fight no longer. Meanwhile the ſentiments of ſurrounding nations roſe in arms againſt the Britiſh cabinet. The atrocity of their means inſpired horror; their obſtinacy contempt. For ages the ſun had not ſhone on ſcenes like the maſſacres at Wyoming and the adjacent forts. Courage excepted, another ALVA was ſeen in SACKVILLE; nor did modern times afford any thing parallel to the deſign in which this miniſter ſo unrelentingly perſevered; unleſs it were the attempt to enſlave Holland under Philip II. whom his own beſotted ſubjects, becauſe he regularly went through the manœuvres of devotion, revered as little inferior to a ſaint upon earth, though few tyrants, before or ſince, have cauſed ſo much innocent blood to flow.

At this ſeaſon, the heart of the nation was ſoftened with contrition: The cauſe of ſo much ſhame and ſorrow was anxiouſly ſought. In ſuch a frame of mind imputations are lightly credited; and we cannot wonder that advantage ſhould have been taken of repentant credulity to the imminent danger of the country's ſafety. The Commons were loudly accuſed. The majority, it was aſſerted, had acted rather as mutes to the miniſter than as watchmen to the people. Theſe clamours for a truſt-worthy repreſentation, ſtrengthened by others for curtailing the miniſter's means of patroniſing villainy, had well nigh laid bare the ſtate to all the perils of innovation. It was in vain that perſons of eaſy and contented tem-

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per made profeſſion of acquieſcence in the preſent condition of things. Although the facetious interrogation—*who ſays we are ruined?* failed not to be anſwered by the cuſtomary laugh from the partakers of a ſumptuous feaſt, diſaffection gained the ear of the multitude. An impoveriſhed people and intolerable burdens, millions waſted and thouſands ſlaughtered to no purpoſe, were proclaimed, as by the voice of the public crier, in every ſtreet; nor does it appear that adminiſtration took any means to check this turbulent language. The diſaffected were left at full liberty, under pretext of preventing a recurrence of the like evils, to purſue practices that might have terminated in the deſtruction of the balance of the conſtitution itſelf. It reſted but with their forbearance to impreſs on men's minds an indelible horror of thoſe imaginary arts, of which the majority were declared to have been the dupes, and the flower of the people the victims. They might with impunity have publiſhed *catechiſms*, that children, whoſe inheritance they leſſened forſooth, might have been taught to liſp deteſtation of the iniquitous councils, which had been lately followed: *ballads* for the labourer, whoſe daily bread they occaſioned him to earn more painfully, to ſing over his work: together with *hiſtories* of all ſizes, *verſes* of every meaſure, and *devices* ſuited to the meaneſt capacity, till the American war had become a greater bugbear than Popery and the Spaniſh Armada.

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This evil-intentioned faction might have called upon Engliſhmen not to forfeit, by future follies, that reputation for thoughtfulneſs which their anceſtors acquired: and it had been eaſy to draw from preſent diſguſt a perpetual warning againſt fits of haſty fondneſs for public men.

The engine—it might have been inſidiouſly alledged—which ſo lately moved the groſs body of the people, was the confidence they were taught to repoſe in the miniſter: for behold! as ſoon as that confidence is withdrawn, the termination of the war appears in proſpect; and had it never been entertained, the commencement of the war had been impoſſible. In that ſtate of ſentiment, which will be univerſal a few years hence, it will be curious to look back upon the motives and ſtrength of an infatuation, which, if the ſurviving part of this generation care not to own it, they may aſcribe to their fathers.

As a ſtateſman, a financier, and a parliamentary performer, Lord North will be deſcribed as having obtained unbounded admiration. In reply, which was eſteemed the moſt difficult department of oratory, he ſtood unrivalled. An air of frankneſs pervaded his ſpeeches, and exempted him from the ſuſpicion of a double tongue. The indolence of his carriage, and his occaſional exertions, preſented the imagination with an amuſing contraſt. He ſeemed one of thoſe animals of enormous ſtrength and gentle diſpoſition

poſition which trample down armies in their wrath, but in their ordinary mood, ſuffer themſelves to be conducted by a child.

He was free from thoſe irregularities by which men of keener feelings have unjuſtly forfeited the eſteem of ſociety; and the ſluggiſhneſs of his nature gave him the full advantage of ſyſtematical hypocriſy. His domeſtic conduct in a middle ſtation would have conferred no diſtinction; but to a miniſter, the eldeſt ſon of a peer, a life free from private ſcandal was imputed as ſuperlatively meritorious. Of the ceremonies of the church he was obſervant, and a zealot for its privileges. Hence the trumpet-tongues of clergymen and ſentimental ladies inceſſantly proclaimed him as the pattern of pious perfection, And what concerned none beyond the man himſelf and his houſhold, was impoſed upon the credulous as indiſputable proof of his miniſterial abilities. After this fatal confuſion of ideas, it was in vain that the tomahawks of ſavages diſpenſed the tender mercies of his adminiſtration. "The "miniſter is mild, affectionate, humane. "How then can his meaſures be other than "a neceſſary proceſs of national juſtice?" It was in vain that every enterprize failed and every expectation was baulked. "Deſigns, "the beſt concerted, are liable to temporary "miſcarriages; but can a ſtateſman, ſo "eloquent in debate, ſo expert in buſineſs, "ſo full of reſources in finance, ſo wiſe in "council, proſecute a ſyſtem that muſt finally "fail?" Nothing leſs than the accumulated

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diſgraces of his political life were ſufficient to diſabuſe the people; and had not the famous coalition heaped the meaſure of evidence, Mr. Burke's aſſertion that Lord North and his aſſociates, in ſpite of the public diſtreſſes, would perſiſt in the American war to the end of the century, unleſs they could make ſuch a peace as would leave them a chance of continuing in office, might at this day have been regarded as the effuſion of frantic malignity.

Had this anti-miniſterial invective been thought likely, by a change of form, to prevent implicit confidence in public functionaries, it had been eaſy to tranſlate it into verſe:

"Let ſlip the dogs of war," the Premier ſaid:
Each ſkip-jack peer inclin'd his ſupple head.
For NORTH his Commons paſſed the ready vote,
To NORTH the preacher lent his liquid throat.
Maſked in unſpotted lawn, with ſolemn breath
The fawning biſhop bleſſed the work of death.
Handmaid of ſtate! inventive FRAUD deſign'd
Each wile that lulls, appals or fires the mind,
With Faſt and Proclamation, Falſe Alarm
Combin'd to work the ſenſe-controuling charm.
AND NOW, my Country! to thy cheated ſight
Oppreſſion takes the reverend form of *Right*.
Swift round thy coaſts vindictive rancour runs,
And —— phrenzy agitates thy ſons.
Youth, ſelf-devoted, burns his blood to pour;
Old Age—more precious ſtill—his hoarded ſtore,
Lank Labour's wreſted earnings buy the knave;
And ſpurious Honour's goad impels the brave.

UNUSUAL horrors War's ſtern front aſſumes,
As o'er his helmet frown Tartarean plumes.
Of carcaſe-butcher Chiefs the cheapened ſlaves
Bear Britain's vengeance o'er the Weſtern waves.

Roused

Rouſed from the wilds that ſkirt Columbia's fields,
His axe of death the unpitying ſavage wields.
With rude impetuous ſtep, unmarſhalled trains
Ruſh into day and howl along the plains;
So when dark SOLSTICE rears his wintry form,
Cloud drives on cloud, and ſtorm is preſſed by ſtorm—

THROUGH each bleſt vale as murder's yell reſounds,
And ſcares its tenants from their cultur'd bounds,
The mother, dreadleſs of the fatal ſnake,
Claſps her ſnatch'd babe amid the foreſt brake;
In vain—the fell purſuer burſts his way,
Tracks with ſure ſcent, and ſtarts his ſhrieking prey.

MARK! at his nod as Albion's legions haſte,
Join the dire taſk, and lay creation waſte,
How crouching ſycophants the PREMIER greet,
And chaunt rebellion proſtrate at his feet;
While whiſpered words the dearer hope inſtil,
Of Britons plaſtic to the Deſpot's will.
Vain hope of Guilt! Indignant Freedom's ſpear
Arreſts his councils in their dark career.
No breathleſs courier laurelled tidings bears;
No wreath rewards the warrior-ſtateſman's cares.
His nobleſt trophy, lo! the captive's chain,
And widows' wailings his triumphal ſtrain.
Back on his head the ills he broods recoil!
INVASION threats his Country's peaceful ſoil;
DISMAY with gorgon aſpect ſtrides the land,
And points where hoſtile prows o'erlook her ſtrand;
Her haughty navy veils its pendants low,
Cries to the gales, and ſcuds before the foe.

Such glories Fate's all-juſt decrees impart
To nations, *light of faith* and *proud of heart.*

CHAPTER III.

Manifeſtation of a Patriot.—How is the Senſe of a Nation to be known?—An invective ſucceeded by a panegyric.

" It is true his opinions againſt the American war were " deciſive; but that queſtion he found ready prepared to " his hands.

Earl FITZWILLIAM, *Feb.* 4, 1784.

FROM that record of patriotic wiſdom, entitled, *the parliamentary regiſter*, it appears that about midnight on the 12th of June 1781, the repreſentatives of the Britiſh people, undiſmayed by diſaſters, unſeduced by commiſeration, and firm againſt popular diſcontent, negatived by 172 voices out of 271, a motion tending to the diſcontinuance of the American war, which had now raged for above ſix years. On ſuch a ſubject it was impoſſible to be lukewarm, but this debate is not memorable merely for its animation. It was diſtinguiſhed alſo by an effort, betokening duplicity rather than contrivance, to charge the memory of the late earl of Chatham with a ſhare of the odium every moment accumulating upon the preſent adminiſtration. That popular ſtateſman had, it was aſſerted, himſelf

himſelf maintained the very principles that led to this conteſt. In the ſhifting combinations of human events, a more inviting opportunity for a public ſpeaker has never perhaps occurred, than now preſented itſelf to the ſon of the ſtateſman whoſe ſentiments were in queſtion. To reſcue his father's memory from the imputation, was a taſk of ſmall difficulty. For when Mr. Pitt averred that Lord Chatham had uniformly, both by ſpeech and vote, oppoſed the principle, progreſs, and tendency of the American war, not one individual, even among the train-bands of the treaſury, was hardy enough to controvert the vindication.

His own ſentiments were expreſſed by the youthful orator, with all the vehemence of which declamation is capable. "The war" he too would affirm, "was a moſt accurſed, "wicked, barbarous, unnatural, unjuſt, and "diabolical war. It was conceived in in-"juſtice; it was nurtured and brought forth "in folly; its footſteps were marked with blood, "ſlaughter, perſecution, and devaſtation. "In truth, every thing which went to con-"ſtitute moral depravity and human turpitude "was to be found in it ..... black "reſentments ..... produced it..... "The unhappy people of this country were "made the inſtruments to effect the *wicked* "*purpoſes* of its authors..... the expence "was enormous ..... yet what had the "Britiſh nation received in return? Nothing "but a ſeries of INEFFECTIVE VICTORIES "or SEVERE DEFEATS."

In this opinion almoſt all men, whatever they might formerly think, were now agreed; and events, diſtinctly foreſeen, were at hand to bring over from the miniſter his ſmall remainder of adherents. Nevertheleſs Mr. Pitt gained diſtinguiſhed favour by this effuſion: he was admired at once for filial piety and public ſpirit. His hereditary aſſociation with a man whoſe adminiſtration had intoxicated the people with the fumes of military glory, and whoſe name they ſtill pronounced with enthuſiaſm, was now ſtrengthened almoſt to identity: and from this moment, *public expectation*, which, in ſpite of continual diſappointment, is ready to run after every young prince and untried ſtateſman, obſequiouſly attended upon the movements of the new patriot.

He had once before ſpoken in parliament. By vehement cenſures of miniſterial extravagance, and by re-echoing the allegation of numerous petitions, "that œconomy was "eſſential to national ſalvation," he had then caught the public ear. Afterwards, during Lord North's continuance in office, he ſtepped occaſionally forward, though ſeldom, and only on queſtions of the higheſt moment. On the whole ſyſtem of meaſures he pronounced unqualified condemnation. Its chief director he ſcrupled not to charge with fraud, terming him "a miniſter long practiſed in the arts of "deluſion;" and his co-operators, "men "without ſenſibilility or ſhame." The war he ſtyled, "the grand pillar built on the ruins "of

" of the conſtitution ..... the great means " of extending that *baleful influence* of the " crown, on which alone the miniſter placed " all his ſecurity." He appealed to his audidence, " whether it were uncharitable to " implore the Almighty to ſhower down his " vengeance on the men who were the authors " of their country's ruin." Of the indignation of " a great ſuffering people" he ſpoke as if it " were ready to fall on their heads." Nor did he fail to inſiſt upon their incapacity, as fully evinced by the iſſue of their councils. And he vehemently exhorted " the houſe to " reſcue itſelf from the diſgrace of being ſub- " ſervient to their deſpicable views."

Lord North was the political heir of that unpopular FAVOURITE, who had undermined the elder Pitt in the midſt of his ſucceſſes. The remembrance of the father's wrongs might be ſuppoſed to embitter the ſon's language, had not the orators, who " prepared " the queſtion to his hand," given frequent examples of invective equally acrimonious, though not often of invective ſo unalloyed by argument. For theſe early ſpeeches appear in reality mere burſts of indignation, more likely indeed to win upon the people than the moſt concluſive reaſoning, becauſe in harmony with their feelings, and becauſe they ſeemed to breathe the ingenuous ſpirit of youth. In the ſentiments, as preſerved by reporters, impartial criticiſm will diſcover few indications of an uncommonly acute or profound underſtanding. They were doubtleſs uttered with

with a power of elocution which at any age will be uncommon, till the Grecian art of declaiming ſhall be received into the regular courſe of ſtudy for the academical youth of Britain. Our performer had been probably led to cultivate this art with aſſiduity. On the teſtimony of the hearers, confirmed by ſubſequent exhibitions, we muſt at leaſt believe that the muſic was fine, but we have the means of ſatisfying ourſelves that there is not much in the words.

Equal aſperity of crimination pervades the ſpeeches of Mr. Pitt's companions and relations. Mr. Bankes will be found advancing, "that the nation was deceived into the war "with America," charging adminiſtration "with inability," both as to deſign and execution, and deſcanting on "the ungenerous "arts they practiſed to blacken the character "of every profeſſional man they employed." The language of Mr. Thomas Pitt bears a ſtill ſharper point. "Adminiſtration," ſays he, "ſeems to be actuated by the worſt of "motives . . . . . their's is a paſſion of too "baſe a nature to be mentioned in this "houſe. . . . . The *lachrymæ rerum* do not "touch them . . . . . no matter what puppets "work the diſmal ſcene! whether one low "little ſet of men on that ſide, or another "low little ſet on this, while the ſyſtem re-"mains, and the ſecret poiſoning influence "with which it begun, and has continued "through the preſent reign.*"

* Debates, June 12, 1781.

Thus

Thus events forced upon the moſt diſintereſted members of the legiſlature, a conviction that the governing junto had invented and ſcrupled not to uſe means adequate to an effect, of which acknowledged arbitrary power alone was ſuppoſed capable. FOR THEY WITNESSED A WAR CARRIED ON IN OPPOSITION, NOT LESS TO THE DECLARED WILL THAN THE OBVIOUS INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE: And while the reſt of Europe was worried by the wolves of deſpotiſm, they lamented that a free people, in ſpite of its happy conſtitution, ſhould be bloodſucked by the vampires of corruption.

Had Mr. Bankes been challenged for proof, this youthful politician (from whom, when he ſallied forth againſt his country's enemies, Cambridge expected hardly leſs than from her Pitt) might have attempted to bring out his allegations by the following analyſis:

"Neither a majority nor any conſiderable "portion of the people, exerciſing their un-"biaſſed judgment as jurors, have given a "verdict in favour of the war of this day. If "the paſſions were rouſed and men's minds "overborne by deceitful arts, ſhall we not, in "fairneſs, impute the calamity to the de-"ceivers, inſtead of the deceived?"

"We all know what admiration a German "monarch has acquired among potentates, "addicted to the princely diverſion of *man-"hunting*, by his improved ſyſtem of mili-"tary tactics. In the political branch of this

"this art the hero of ROSBACH has been "equalled in merit, though not in praiſe, "by the illuſtrious chief of our public "councils. And you will feel with what "juſtice I contend that, by ſkilfully manœuvr- "ing the few, he has vanquiſhed the will and "underſtanding of the many, when you per- "ceive how he has parcelled out the inhabitants "of the kingdom into diviſions, politically "active and paſſive. The firſt diviſion con- "ſiſts of individuals *directly under his influence*. "Obſerve how exactly he makes their num- "ber keep pace with the national diſtreſſes, "and contrives that every freſh burden ſhall "bring him a freſh ſupply of recruits. You "will recollect how much the well-diſciplined "corps of jeſuits contributed to the police of "the whole catholic world; and can you be "ſo blind as not to ſee whether the obedience "of the troops in the ſervice of our Britiſh "miniſter be as prompt as that of the janizaries "of the Romiſh church?"

"I will not fatigue you with the roll-call "of the ſeveral bands that compoſe this prime "diviſion. The moſt effective is doubtleſs "that of which the members contrive to "paſs themſelves on ſimplicity for adviſers of "the people. We have all heard it rumoured "that the ſum paid in 1760 to Smollett, "Francis, Mallet, and other authors hired "to write down Mr. Secretary Pitt exceeded "forty thouſand pounds, and the printing "charges twice that ſum.* This diſtribution "of ſecret ſervice money was accounted at

* Anecdotes of Chatham, 1794. (p. 347.)

that

" that time a maſterly (and it undoubtedly
" was an effective) ſtroke of policy. How
" then may the noble Lord applaud himſelf
" if by at once enliſting the whole body of
" publiſhers of provincial newſpapers into his
" firſt diviſion, he have acquired the power of
" infuſing into the commonalty of cities, and
" the commonalty of villages, juſt whatever
" inclinations his purpoſes may require? In
" this caſe, all that is required is to lie boldly,
" not ſkilfully; and four journaliſts will do
" more towards maddening the people than
" four hundred prudent perſons, privately
" uttering their honeſt ſentiments towards
" keeping them within the bounds of reaſon."

" This whole claſs of agents, whether en-
" gaged by the job or for all work, appears to
" receive regular pay—no matter whether in
" money or valuables—and often beforehand.

" The next is content with *what your honour*
" *pleaſes*. The compoſition of this ſecond ſqua-
" dron, as much as I bluſh to diſcloſe, you will
" be ſcandalized when you learn—but reproach
" be with the criminal and not the accuſer.—
" Our war-miniſters, I am ſure, will not be
" baſe enough to diſown their obligation to the
" meek ſons of the clergy. And if they ſhould,
" forty-nine out of fifty faſt ſermons are at
" hand to convict them of ingratitude. We
" have, in fact, ſeen ſo many minds, catching
" military ardour from the voice of thoſe that
" ſpeak in the name of the Prince of Peace,

" that were Peter the hermit to re-appear
" among us, he need not deſpair of finding
" recruits for the Holy Land.

" The third is a mixed and motley claſs.
" Here we find the moſt miſchievous of the
" votaries of folly. Dreaming of independence,
" they are ſuſceptible of whatever impreſſion a
" miniſter chooſes they ſhould receive. The
" motives which it is neceſſary to play off on
" their minds are various. One becomes an ac-
" complice in blood to extort a revenue which
" he is aſſured will lower the land-tax. A ſe-
" cond is empowered to call his wife, *my lady*.
" A third has his relations quartered on the pub-
" lic; and *does it not ſtand to reaſon*, thinks he to
" himſelf, *that gentlemen-born ſhould be main-
" tained as gentlemen?* A fourth, were his lips
" to be touched with the wand of truth, would
" confeſs: *Mr. Manager, it is my humour to col-
" lect a little group of expectants round my board
" in the country. Enable me to act the patron over
" my circle. In this caſe, Sir*, laying his hand
" on his heart and bowing, *you ſee your very
" humble ſervant to command.* A fifth is weak
" enough to ſuffer himſelf to be perſuaded, that
" opinions are a fit mark for cannon balls.
" A ſixth is told that war, the parent of na-
" tional diſtreſs, will diminiſh national diſ-
" content; and ſtraightway with complaiſant
" ſtupidity, he ſets to pile coals of fire on
" his own head.

" In

"In the ſecond rank of this diviſion we "ſhould ſeek

"Cits who prefer a guinea to mankind,"

"anthropomorph animals furniſhed with ſcarce "an idea of the relations between man and man, "but ſuch as the counting houſe ſupplies, and "fixing with the ſtrong tenacious claw of igno- "rance upon the moſt fatal of political errors. "Do you want their good-will? Place a com- "mercial lure in proſpect, whiſper that our "fleet wants but the word of command to "pounce on the enemy's iſlands. They go "home, dream that the city wharfs are paved "with French ſugar-caſks, and next day in full "council pledge their lives to a cauſe in which "they are well aſſured their little finger will "never run the riſque of a ſcratch.

"With means like theſe, where is the idiot "of a miniſter who cannot knead and leaven "the inert maſs of the people? The noble "lord in the blue ribbon can do more. In "the hour of diſappointment, he can call hea- "ven to witneſs that in him there is no fault, "ſince he, pacific man! was only moved by "the general fermentation!

"It would be eaſy to ſwell this catalogue. "But my purpoſe is not to enumerate all the "*inſtrumenta regni*—the new tools for which "the ſtateſman's craft is indebted to the "mechanic genius of the preſent miniſtry.

" With good ſort of folks, who are ever the " ſtaunch defenders of inveterate prejudices, " when have the cabaliſtic ſtate-phraſes—*un-* " *natural conteſt — diſaffection—exiſting cir-* " *cumſtances—juſt and neceſſary war* — been " known to fail? and how eaſy is it to bring " devout ladies to aſſiſt in conjuring up the " civil ſtorm, and to pipe round the tea-table " to " the dance of death?"

" It is common for a ſuffering ſinner to " feel aſtoniſhment at his want of firmneſs to " reſiſt the laſt prevailing temptation. This " is now the national feeling. But, previous " to the leſſons of experience, what was there " to counteract ſo many arts of deluſion? " What but the warning voice of a few in- " dividuals, lovers of truth and friends of " humanity? Let the modern hiſtory of " Britain bear witneſs to the ſucceſs of their " endeavours. Do they predict beforehand " the courſe of events (to which nothing is " requiſite except ordinary information, and " that rectitude of underſtanding which is the " concomitant of integrity) their remonſtrances " are unheeded, or the remonſtrants are miſ- " apprehended by the people, and hunted, if " poſſible, to death by the junto in power. " Has part of the ſeries of predicted diſaſters " done credit to their foreſight? A paſſive " multitude indolently views ruin approach- " ing. While time is, they ſhew as little " concern as if the miniſter could metamor- " phoſe muſhrooms into men to fight his " battles, and had mines in the moon to fur-

" niſh

" niſh his ſupplies. Hence they let him go " on till he can go on no longer, putting the " event to heart juſt when it is too late to pre- " vent any part of the calamity.

" The outcry that now ariſes againſt pro- " fuſion and influence is the *genuine ſenſe of* " *the people*, extorted by ſevere diſtreſs. The " voices that produced the principal part of " the firſt clamour are heard no more. That " was the *ſpurious ſenſe of the people.*

" As to the authors and abettors of the miſ- " chief, they flatter themſelves that they need " only take a turn at political right hand and " left; at the end of which they ſhall be free " to reſume their old places, juſt as if nothing " had happened. It is not from the perſeverance " in outrage, by which theſe men have rendered " themſelves deteſtable to the people, nor from " its ſlow growth, which ſeems to enſure " duration to this ſentiment, that I promiſe " myſelf they will be miſtaken. I well know " that mankind have a much worſe fault " than even their alacrity to perſecute their " beſt friends. They are prone, though no " ſigns appear of reformation or repentance, " to pardon their moſt cruel enemies. But " againſt the conſequences of this ruinous " error, I find a certain ſecurity in an almoſt " ſuperhuman aſſemblage of talents and " virtues, now unfolding themſelves under " our inſpection, at this moſt ſeaſonable junc- " ture—I perceive I am underſtood—a name " could not be wanting for the appropriation " of this eulogy—The eyes of all my hearers,

" by

" by an inſtantaneous movement, have con-
" ſigned it to him to whom alone it can
" belong. The eyes of the people are like-
" wiſe fixed upon the ſame object; and uni-
" verſal expectation, not leſs than the over-
" awed conſcience of his adverſaries, marks
" out my young friend as the repairer of all
" the miſchiefs they have perpetrated.

" Poſſeſſing the general confidence, he can-
" not long be without the moſt ample power
" competent to a ſubject; and of the uſe
" which he will make of power, the noble-
" neſs of his nature is a ſtronger pledge, than
" vows ratified by ſeven ſacraments. You have
" already heard him avow ſentiments, implying
" all that can be imagined honourable in a pub-
" lic man or advantageous to a ſtate. I call to
" witneſs thoſe hopes and fears, which his lips
" ſcattered among his audience, as various minds
" were variouſly prepared for impreſſion, whe-
" ther he has ſpoken to the heart.

" Difficult as the taſk may prove, I con-
" fidently anticipate the application of recent
" diſcoveries in the great ſcience of political
" œconomy to the promotion of our proſperity.
" I foreſee a ſpeedy correction of that greateſt
" of national calamities — ſuch a diſtribu-
" tion of the produce of the ſoil as tears
" neceſſaries from the labourer to gorge the
" courtier with ſuperfluities. From the can-
" dour of youth and the enlarged mind of the
" individual, it is eaſy to infer that the ſpirit
" of religious animoſity will be ſpeedily laid,
" and mankind be brought to bear with one

" another's

" another's errors. His indignant ſympathy
" with our brethren, whom he has ſo lately
" declared to be combating *in the holy cauſe of*
" *freedom*, may ſatisfy us of his unalterable at-
" tachment to liberty as the parent and nurſe
" of human happineſs and virtue. I ſhall ſay
" nothing of our approaching ſecurity againſt
" the vileſt expedient of a polluted adminiſtra-
" tion—turning the preſs againſt the people.
" When I lately mentioned this fraud, I am
" ſure I muſt have excited the analogous idea
" of poiſon infuſed into the waters of the
" earth—a ſtratagem infamous and reprobated
" among all nations where civilization has in
" any degree mitigated warfare. After de-
" taining you thus long, I dare not truſt
" myſelf upon the copious theme of corruption.
" But I will venture one prediction, which
" comprehends all the wiſhes of all good men.
" The ſtateſman whom providence has allotted
" to Britain that he may educe good out of evil,
" will have continually preſent to his thoughts
" the neceſſity of purifying the adminiſtration
" of her affairs, and DEEM IT THE MOST
" SACRED PART OF HIS MISSION TO DRIVE
" THE BUYERS AND SELLERS OUT OF THE
" TEMPLE OF THE STATE."

CHAP-

CHAPTER IV.

The Patriot a Reformer.

"If Parliament do not reform itſelf from within, it "will be reformed with a vengeance from without."

EARL OF CHATHAM.

"I plainly ſee that nothing but diſtreſs can bring about "a reformation—nothing but DISTRESS OF THE UTMOST "HORROR can open the eyes of the people."

SIR GEORGE SAVILE, *May* 7, 1782.

THE adminiſtration which ſucceeded that of Lord North, having ſubſiſted for little more than three months, Mr. Pitt had not time to take a ſtation in the political hemiſphere, either in conjunction or oppoſition. But the terms in which he ſpoke of its members collectively deſerve notice on account of an opinion they involve. At the beginning of a ſpeech delivered May 7, 1782, "he thanked "God," and towards the concluſion "he "thanked Heaven," that "the preſent mini- "ſters had declared their virtuous reſolution "of ſupporting the king's government by "means more honourable than "the injurious, "corrupt and baneful influence of the crown."

Bating

Bating the reſtraint of honour, then, the new adminiſtration had the choice of running the ſame career which the old had juſt finiſhed. For ſuppoſing they did not ſmuggle villainy into the cabinet, where was our ſecurity that they might not pick it up afterwards and carry it thither?

I have ſpoken of the efforts uſed during the latter part of Lord North's miniſtry, to fill the public mind with diſquietude concerning the ſtate of parliamentary repreſentation. At the preſent period no relaxation had taken place in theſe efforts. Mr. Pitt joined the diſcontented band; and to make himſelf conſpicuous, he adopted the very expedient which he had found to ſucceed ſo well, when the American war was in debate. He laboured to drown the voice of his aſſociates, and ſtrained for expreſſions of more alarming ſound than they had uttered. He repreſented that among the members of the houſe of commons ſome were dependent on the crown, and others on the ariſtocracy. This branch of the legiſlature, he declared, to have received a dangerous bias. He averred that certain boroughs poured in an inundation of corrupt members, inſomuch that the gold of an oriental deſpot actually ſeated ſeveral members in the very aſſembly which he was then addreſſing. From this fact he concluded that it was nothing impoſſible for venality in a time of danger to introduce treachery into the legiſlature; for what ſhould hinder a foreign enemy from effecting that to which a nabob of Arcot was equal? He feared leſt the very reverence

of Engliſhmen for the conſtitution "ſhould, "if not ſuddenly prevented, be the means of "deſtroying it." Theſe are a few out of many ſentiments which he uttered in May 1782. Nor were his fervours ſpeedily abated by meditation. In a ſpeech of ſimilar import delivered ſome years afterwards, he was charged with pronouncing a funeral oration on the Britiſh conſtitution: and had an Engliſhman on his travels boaſted of Britiſh liberty, a foreigner, accuſtomed to read our parliamentary debates, might have retorted on Mr. Pitt's authority:

BULLY OF BRITAIN, be not ſo bold;
Thy boaſted —— ——'s bought and ſold.

In the whole courſe of theſe patriotic effuſions we find the orator aſſiduouſly tracing the paſt, and pointing out the future, operation of *influence*. According to him, it had already damped the fire of Britiſh freedom; and was proceeding ſilently to root out the manly virtues from our ſoil, and bringing up the meaner vices in their ſtead. He deſcribed this power, under the direction of miniſters like Lord North, as capable, if not diminiſhed, of producing an endleſs ſucceſſion of American wars; or, in the language of Margaret Nicholſon, of deluging England in blood for a thouſand generations.* From its operation he foretold that "the houſe of commons, which, "according to the true ſpirit of the conſtitu-"tion, ſhould be the guardian of the people's "freedom—the check and controul over the

* See M. N.'s examination before the privy council.

"exe-

" executive power—would degenerate into a " mere engine of tyranny and oppreſſion: to " deſtroy the conſtitution in effect, though it " ſhould in its outward form ſtill remain."

Mr. Pitt acted in the ſpirit in which he ſpoke: his zeal flamed alike within doors and without: he was the HOTSPUR of innovation. He ſate in council with delegates from different bodies of petitioners for a change in the repreſentation. The parliamentary patriots of that hour induſtriouſly diſtributed hand-bills calling upon the people to aſſert themſelves*; and we know on the authority of Lord Lanſdown†, who it was that in private declared the reform of the houſe of commons to be a cauſe in which loſs of office ought to be riſqued.

It would be tedious to tell, if it were poſſible to collect, all Mr. Pitt did to effect this darling purpoſe. It appears from his own oath‡, that he did more than he now remembers, though it was ſo important an æra of his life,

* 'On the 16th of May, 1782, the Duke of Richmond ſeconded by Mr. H. Tooke and Mr. Pitt was ſitting in a tavern, compoſing advertiſements of reformation for the newſpapers.' Pol. Prog. of Britain, p. 33.

† 'One of the moſt diſtinguiſhed members of the cabinet had called upon him to run the riſk of ſacrificing the adminiſtration, of which he had the honour to make a part, to the ſupport of thoſe very principles: to thoſe principles he verily believed the adminiſtration had fallen a ſacrifice.' P. Reg. xxxiii. 479.

‡ See his teſtimony on Mr. Tooke's trial.

life, and at that age the faculties are ſo retentive. His labours cannot perhaps with propriety be ſaid to have been finally fruitleſs; but as to their immediate object they failed. The ſufferings and terrors produced by the American war ſubſided. Peace introduced *proſperity*. Exceſs of joy admitted not of a pauſe to conſider whether compleat deliverance or only a reſpite from evil were obtained. The people, in obedience to one of King Charles's golden rules, ſoon *ceaſed to repeat grievances*. Long reach of thought being no birth-right of Britons, few minds were overcaſt with apprehenſion of future diſaſters; and exhortations "to turn their eyes inward on "themſelves, that they might ſee if there "were not ſomething radically wrong at "home, that was the chief cauſe of all the "evils they felt*," were heard with as much inattention as the burden of an old ſong.

In the ſequel it will be ſeen whether the following be a juſt account of the *firſt* change which by degrees the ideas of the maſtermover himſelf underwent. "This reform of "parliament is a pretty ſubject for men out of "office to handle; but I obſerve, that when "they get into place, they do not chooſe to "meddle with it; or rather they think it wiſer "to extol it to the ſkies—to talk of its ex"pediency, but always to *find an excuſe in "regard to the time*, declaring that the proper "opportunity is not come§."

* Mr. Pitt's ſpeech on reform.

§ Commons' Debates, June 3, 1785.

CHAP-

CHAPTER V.

Ideas of economy—Moral calculation—Hiſtory of a clerkſhip—Confirmation in popularity.

" I was ſo ſhabby as to think there was no occaſion for
" him to tower above his noble predeceſſors in office, and
" to aſpire at higher acts of diſintereſtedneſs and public
" ſpirit. But Mr. PITT, with notions of purity, not only
" very uncommon in theſe degenerate days, but ſcarcely
" paralleled in the pureſt times of Greece and Rome, has
" nobly preferred the public, to the conſideration of his
" own, intereſt."

LORD THURLOW, *Feb.* 4, 1784.

FROM the retreat of Lord North in March 1782, to the diſgrace of the coalition miniſtry, the elements of the political world were in conſtant commotion. During theſe agitations, our patriot acted a brief and ſecondary part in adminiſtration. His orations were ſtill decked with the choiceſt flowers of ſentiment. In the emulation of invective againſt laviſh expenditure of the money drawn from the people, he bore away, from Mr. Burke himſelf, the palm of favour, though by no means of eloquence, as a well-known ſpeech on œconomical reform will atteſt.* In 1782

* See Mr. Burke's works.

he

he had recommended a bill, calculated "to "carry into effect the wiſhes of the people, "by introducing a ſubſtantial ſyſtem of œco- "nomy," averring that there are times when "ſolid grandeur depends on the reduction of "expence," and ſuſtains no "diminution by "yielding to the reſpectful petitions of the "people."† He obſerved in 1783,‡ "that "there were in moſt of the public offices, "ſinecure places to which great ſalaries were "annexed; and that the nation was burdened "to pay officers who performed no ſervices "whatever. This was good ground for "reform." Theſe ſimple and perpetually violated maxims of honeſty he took care to repeat, till in the eſtimation of his countrymen, and undoubtedly in his own alſo, his word for obſerving them was become his bond.

Such were the materials with which he laid a foundation for confidence in the minds of his countrymen. Early in 1784 they were firmly, if not indiſſolubly, cemented. At that period of contention between the *coalition-majority* and the executive power, ſeconded by popular opinion, a place of large pay and no labour became vacant. This place goes under the name of *Clerkſhip of the Pells*. The marquis of Rockingham immediately before his death had ſettled a penſion of more than 3000l. a year on Colonel Barré, who in oppoſing the American war ſeems to have made handſome ſacrifices of profit to his conſcience. Mr. Pitt, now holding the chief office under

† Debates, Feb. 27. ‡ Ditto, Feb. 10.

the

the crown in defiance of the Commons, prevailed on Colonel Barré to reſign his penſion, and appointed him to the vacant place. This pledge of ſincerity added new warmth to the general approbation. The praiſes of his diſintereſtedneſs were ſung alike by Lords and Commons. He never perhaps felt much obligation to the meeting of independent members at the St. Albans' tavern, for their well intended endeavours to conciliate the jarring leaders of the two oppoſite parties. He could now ſecurely defy the efforts of all who ſhould attempt to diſpoſſeſs him, or provide him with partners in power.

No circumſpect hearer could however feel the glow of approbation, when a lord of the bedchamber praiſed the miniſter for his "noble "and generous conduct" in rejecting the advice of the lord on the woolſack. "to take "the clerkſhip himſelf, as it had ſo fairly "fallen into his hands." This ſtep, if we allow him the ſmalleſt perception of his own intereſt, was impoſſible. Had he graſped at the ſinecure for his own emolument, or for the benefit of his relations, degradation of character, if not total ruin of popularity, muſt have been the inſtant conſequence. Selfiſh craft therefore (patriotic virtue being put out of the queſtion) would ſuggeſt that 3000l. a year could in no way ſo well be laid out as in buying an additional ſtock of popular favour, and that the pecuniary intereſt of the family would thus be beſt conſulted.

From

From the abolition of the penſion, his country *then* actually deduced "a happy "preſage of the good conſequences ſhe was "likely to derive from ſo illuſtrious a cha-"racter."‡ And who will doubt whether this inference was the warmeſt wiſh of Mr. Pitt's heart? Has the preſage been fulfilled? If not, what ought to be our inference *now?*

Let us imagine a court, like the Amphyctionic council of Greece, inſtituted to decide on public merit and demerit. Let us ſuppoſe their ſeſſions to be held under the palms of ſome South-ſea iſland, that diſtance from the paſſions of Europe may guarantee the impartiality of their deciſions. Would not ſuch a court find in this tranſaction, as it might be interpreted by the miniſter's conduct when he became fixed in office, evidence ſufficient to warrant the following ſentence: *If he who afforded this preſage, have not fulfilled it by an effective reduction of extravagant ſalaries and by abolition of uſeleſs ſinecures, let him be devoted to perpetual infamy, as having acted one of the moſt deteſtable frauds in the annals of mankind.*

Hatred of the coaleſced politicians had no other effect than to augment a rival's popularity. The fall of Lord North and Mr. Fox ſerved merely to exalt Mr. Pitt in the public eſteem. The great diſappointment, produced by their conduct, operated in no degree as a warning with reſpect to other ſtateſmen; it was rather a motive for new confidence.

‡ Earl Fauconberg. Debates, p. 123, for 1784.

I believe this event would have produced an impreſſion ſomewhat different upon a people capable of reaſoning diſpaſſionately. It ſeems to me that a cool ſpectator, ſuppoſing him to have thought, as the new miniſter and his warmeſt advocates ſpoke, of the confederates, muſt in conſiſtency have argued in this manner: "I ſee before "me a man once claſſed by the nation among "her ableſt ſtateſmen; the qualities of whoſe "heart his ſupporters† can ſtill applaud with "the certainty of a favourable hearing, though "it is become prudent to paſs over the en-"dowments of his mind in ſilence. I behold "another, who by a long defence of the cauſe "of humanity, has acquired the appellation "of MAN OF THE PEOPLE; and whoſe very "popularity is deſtined to furniſh matter of "reproach to his opponents.* Both ſtand "convicted of deceiving the people by falſe "pretences. Both have ſacrificed principle to "deſire of power. How ought I to look upon "a third, who has hitherto uſed plauſible lan-"guage indeed, but not more plauſible than "the ſecond? He has attained the object of "his ſpeeches. I muſt *now* watch him nar-"rowly; for the hiſtory of his predeceſſors "fills me with unavoidable ſuſpicion." A perſon who reaſoned in this manner, on advert-

† See a ſpeech of Mr. Dundas in praiſe of Lord North, in one of the debates immediately preceding the change of miniſtry.

* See Mr. Pitt's ſpeeches on the Weſtminſter election of 1784, in which he ſeldom fails to reproach Mr. Fox with his *quondam* popularity.

ing to the enthuſiaſm of his countrymen, would with difficulty have forborne whiſpering to himſelf, "O ſuperſtitious nation! to "whom an idol is neceſſary, though with the "ſimple African thou be reduced to worſhip "a ſerpent, or a crocodile with the ſtupid "Egyptian."

Such reflections might, in reality, have occurred to conſiderate individuals. But I deſpair of finding terms adequate to the ſanguine hopes of the people. It is moderate to aſſert that neither SCIPIO, when he had delivered Rome from her moſt formidable rival, nor WASHINGTON, the founder of American independence, received more enthuſiaſtic adoration than the political adventurer, whoſe patriotiſm reſted on the ſame bluſtering evidence as BOBADIL's valour.

In *addition*, the ſum total muſt be equal to the ſeveral articles to be added together. In moral judgments this rule ſeldom obtains; it is moſt flagrantly tranſgreſſed in the valuation of public characters. By a compariſon of the circumſtances upon which confidence was founded, with the amount of that confidence, we ſhall diſcover how far it was obſerved in the preſent inſtance.

Firſt, and principally, the object was William Pitt, the ſon of William Pitt. The nation ſagaciouſly diſcovered evidence of his merit in the ſound of his name.

2. He

2. He delivered himſelf in the moſt high-flying terms, on the popular topics of influence and corruption. To make up for being the lateſt, he took care to be the loudeſt of thoſe who clamoured for reform. This was his great merit or art.

3. In virtue of his youth, he gained credit for incorruptible integrity.

4. His manner was advantageous; he declaimed pompouſly; and when he reaſoned, gave proofs of a quick, diſcerning, and cultivated mind. His ſpeeches, in relation to his age, deſerved diſtinguiſhed approbation; they obtained blind admiration. An hundred young men at ſchool and college would, in an eſſay, have turned the common places on liberty and patriotiſm, with equal dexterity, againſt the diſcomfited conductors of the American war. But not one could have been found ſo trained to the habit of uttering them promptly. Fluency of elocution however does not appear to be more cloſely connected with wiſdom than facility or elegance of compoſition.

5. By an act which, as it might equally proceed from patriotic diſintereſtedneſs, and the loweſt cunning, his future conduct could alone render unequivocal, he confirmed the faith of a credulous people.

6. Certain candidates for power incurred our diſpleaſure; and we, cool, diſpaſſionate Engliſhmen! took their rival to our boſom in pure deſpite.

Such are the items of Mr. Pitt's account with the public, ending with the year 1784; nor will there be much difficulty in finding the ſum of merit which they make. On the fourth article, ſince it relates to a talent that has faſcinated mankind in all ages, I may be permitted to add a few remarks——The warmeſt admirers of Mr. Pitt as a public ſpeaker have ſeldom, I believe, fancied that his ſpeeches would go down to poſterity as claſſic productions. In clearneſs of expoſition he is not ſuperior to Lord North, in amenity and happineſs of alluſion far inferior. Mr. Burke is univerſally acknowledged to ſurpaſs him in wit, imagery, and variety of knowledge. Mr. Fox may be ſet down as at leaſt equally prompt and argumentative with his rival. I ſhall not venture any opinion concerning the more mild and generous temper of his ambition. No man's heart ſhould be pronounced incapable of taint till he has been in place for years. In private Mr. Fox may not always have been governed by prudence, nor in public by principle. But were the ſins of all the gameſters and all the libertines in the jockey-club accumulated on one head, they would not compoſe a charge ſo foul and odious as ariſes from the cruel ſtory of poor Lemaitre alone.† In information of the kind beſt befitting the ſtateſman, the miniſter cannot ſuſtain a moment's competition with a nobleman, between whom and Mr. Fox unhappy jealouſies created a diviſion which has rendered

† See Lemaitre's narrative. Smith, Portſmouth-Street, Lincoln's inn fields. 1795.

their

their abilities unavailing to ſave their country a ſingle drop of blood. More accurately poſſeſſed of particulars, this politician combines them more juſtly. His ideas, while meaſures are depending, would often do credit to the ſagacity of the hiſtorian who ſhould conceive them after experience of their effect. During theſe eventful times, no eye has ſeen farther or more diſtinctly into futurity. Of a faculty, ſo eſſential in judging of the relative ſituation of countries, or in foreign politics, where are the indications that it is poſſeſſed by Mr. Pitt? The iſſue of our American conteſt was certain at his firſt appearance. With the aſſiſtance of his Majeſty of Pruſſia, it was nothing hazardous to attempt to dragoon the Dutch into ſubmiſſion: and he may be content if his dear-bought Spaniſh laurels (ſuppoſing him to have gained any), are ſet againſt his Ruſſian diſgraces. One occaſion only of difficulty has preſented itſelf to him, and a few months perhaps will convince every unbribed ſpectator of his conduct, whether he poſſeſſes a larger ſhare of penetration than Lord North.

In debate he is ſeldom pathetic, ſublime, or in any way impreſſive. Has a ſingle ſentiment that circulates in converſation darted from his lips? Has he on any occaſion manifeſted that talent, by which truth is brought before an audience diſtinctly embodied, and brightly illuminated? It were ridiculous to compare him with the men whom this generation has heard rivalling the moſt powerful ſpeakers of Greece

Greece and Rome. Aſſuredly, he wields not the thunders of oratory; and if he ſhould throw Europe into commotion, it would be by intrigue, and not by eloquence.

Perſpicuity, when he chooſes to ſpeak plainly, flowing uniformity of phraſeology, mediocrity of conception, affectation of fine feeling, boaſtful arrogance, and the trick of imputing criminal motives, may be accounted his characteriſtics as a public ſpeaker. In one of theſe qualities, his ſpeeches ſo far exceed thoſe of all other orators, that the circumſtance has oftener than once been noticed. An accurate obſerver mentions it in the following terms, and if competition be ſuſpected to add aſperity to his ſtrictures, they are not on that account to be rejected as without foundation. For oppoſition might have come in a different ſhape without diminution of its efficacy; and his antagoniſt, during a life of oppoſition, has never once had an opportunity of criticiſing other adverſaries in the ſame tone.

"I cannot," ſaid Mr. Fox, "help remark-
"ing the vaſt diſparity in the ſtyle of expreſſion
"exhibited by the right honourable gentleman
"upon this night, and that which he deemed
"it expedient to adopt when he opened the
"eighteen propoſitions to this houſe. Upon
"that occaſion I could not help remarking
"that his magnificent terms, his verboſe
"periods, and thoſe big bombaſtic ſentiments,
"which conſtitute in general the principal
"part of his orations, had for once forſaken
"him. Then we ſaw that prepoſterous am-
"bition,

"bition, that gaudy pride, that vaulting "vanity, which glare upon the obſerver, "beyond all the other characteriſtic features "of the right honourable gentlemen, melt "away."*

On many occaſions his deportment has been ſuch as it is difficult to underſtand, unleſs we ſuppoſe either that the fondneſs of his country had filled him with the humours of a ſpoiled child, or that he conſiders the adminiſtration of affairs as his patrimony; in conſequence of which perſuaſion he has ſcornfully repelled oppoſition, as an incroachment on his rightful poſſeſſion; and imagined that the rejoicings of the people in 1784 were for the acceſſion of a great heir.

* Debates, May 30, 1785.

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Pitt a Peace Miniſter.

——— *Sume ſuperbiam*
Quæſitam meritis.——

Look up, and bid the *Cicerone* ſun
Shine forth and ſhew the wonders thou haſt done.

FROM the period of profeſſion, we come to the period of performance. Ten years ago, a ſpeaker in the houſe of Lords remarked that it might poſſibly be aſked, " *how, in* " *the name of God, did this man twiſt himſelf* " *in to be miniſter* * ?" The queſtion has much the air of an affirmation in diſguiſe. Otherwiſe he who aſked it, was eminently qualified, by his knowledge of the ſcene and of the actors, to furniſh the anſwer. Certain intrigues are well remembered to have been the occaſion of much obloquy. But as his Grace of Portland has prevailed on himſelf to forgive them, why ſhould they be brought ſpitefully forward by a perſon whoſe ambition they did not baulk? I have confined myſelf to the origin of that national ſentiment which

* Debates July 8, 1785. Parl. Reg. xviii. p. 80.

confirmed

confirmed the new occupant in his elevated poſt. His great popularity, as we have ſeen, was *given*, not *gained*. And if, when plenary acceptation precedes probation, a powerful incentive to excellence be annihilated, this of all poſſible donations was ſurely the moſt inconſiderate. It was throwing away the ſecurity, before the debtor's reſponſibility and honour could be aſcertained.

I need not trace the new premier in the exerciſe, ſo minutely as in the attainment of power. My chief concern is with incidents that render motives conſpicuous. Meaſures, from which ſome judgment of ability may be formed, have a ſecondary claim to my attention. But what every man muſt do like every other, I paſs over as affording nothing characteriſtic.

Among the tranſactions in which Mr. Pitt's wiſhes break the covert of his words, there are ſome which require ſlight analyſis. The dulleſt chronicler, though he may not hit upon the exact ſhade, will not exhibit them in falſe colours. In 1785 for example, on the queſtion concerning the Weſtminſter ſcrutiny; "when the miniſter and the veteran "phalanx of courtiers . . . . . were left in one "of the moſt diſgraceful minorities ever "known in the Britiſh houſe of commons"*; it will be difficult altogether to miſtake the ſpirit which animated that violent conflict of voices. For perſons, curious to detect the

* See the perſpicuous and manly "memoirs of George III." iv. 55.

earlieſt indications of character, moſt intereſting matter for reflection is laid up in theſe long diſcuſſions. It is for ſuch perſons to decide whether the oppoſition, with which the popular leader encounters the claims of his adverſary, betrays any token of a generous or even of an equitable mind. They may conſider if he who could triumph with inſolence in the ſenate, when he had the ear of the majority, might not be tempted to triumph with cruelty, if he ſhould ever have courts of juſtice under his influence, and executioners at his command. We have lately ſeen†, what a vindictive uſe the demagogue of another people made of his victory; and by comparing two men, who acquired popularity by means not diſſimilar, the movements of the ambitious heart may perhaps be more diſtinctly perceived. Between different methods of cruſhing an enemy, there may be a wide difference in point of barbarity. But he who ſets out with making his own partizans bluſh for his ſophiſms, ought to be ſuſpected of a diſpoſition to proceed any lengths in injuſtice, by which his own aggrandiſement may be promoted or ſecured.

The

† Je vis à l' inſtant qu' il mettoit lui ſon orgueil, ſon triomphe & ſa grandeur à écraſer impitoyablement ſes ennemis..... Je vis à l' inſtant que lui ne trouvoit ſa ſûreté que dans la deſtruction de tous ceux qui lui inſpiroient des craintes. *GARAT Memoires de la revolution*, 1795. p. 186. See the whole paſſage, in which this great maſter of the pen deſcribes Robeſpierre's behaviour when he (Garat) applied to him in behalf of the impriſoned Girondiſts.

The affair of the ſhop-tax may provoke nothing beyond a ſmile from ſuch as are moſt diſpoſed to charge the miniſter with obſtinacy. But in the mind of him who ſometimes

——— Sits in ſorrow for mankind,

the ſeverities againſt the race of pedlars will excite emotions of profound melancholy. The conſternation which ſeized theſe meritorious people, when they were disfranchiſed of great part of the means, by which they gained an honeſt livelihood, brought to mind the expulſion of the Moriſcoes from Spain: "crouds "of them were reduced to a ſtate of ſtarving"†: and on a late peruſal of the debates, where the miniſter's humbleſt‡ friends are ſeen in vain interceding againſt this harſh meaſure, I felt ſtrongly inclined to attempt the hiſtory of the *perſecuted pedlar*, as a companion to that of *Iſaac Jenkins and Sarah his wife*. Examples like theſe, of diſabilities enacted againſt defenceleſs induſtry, add force to the concluſion deducible from the ſweeping devaſtation of juſt and neceſſary wars: and there are few

† Polit. progreſs of Britain, p. 25.

‡ "Why ſhould ſo laudable a ſet of men be ſingled out "for ſeverity? I have heard nothing againſt them but "ungrounded ſuſpicions, which might be imputed to any "ſet of men whatever, and upon which alone the legiſla-"ture ought ſurely not to reſt meaſures of an injurious "tendency..... I ſee no reaſon why it ſhould be "imagined that hawkers and pedlars are more addicted "to ſmuggling than ſhopkeepers. The latter can ſurely "better conceal ſmuggled goods in their ſhops and houſes, "than a hawker and pedlar, who carries all his goods on "his back, can poſſibly conceal them." Mr. J. H. Browne, *Debates*, 16 *May* 1786.

claſſes of human beings and few corners of the globe, whoſe hiſtory does not proclaim, that *man is an animal unfit to be truſted in confidence with power.*

Tranſactions of leſs moment being excluded, the meaſures, which the interval of peace gave Mr. Pitt an opportunity of propoſing, fall, for the moſt part, under theſe heads: *regulations reſpecting external poſſeſſions: regulations reſpecting commerce: regulations reſpecting finance.* Each operation may be conſidered in three points of view: 1. *how far it beſpeaks extraordinary intelligence:* 2. *how far it was conceived in the pure ſpirit of patriotiſm:* and 3. *how far it has contributed to render more happy the exiſtence of the Engliſh people, individually conſidered; or, what miſeries it has removed, and what permanent comforts it has introduced into the boſom of each family.*

The vaſt, contentious, and perplexed buſineſs of India received our youthful miniſter on his entrance, or rather helped him, into office. A prejudice, derived from the gothic ages, having rendered the opulence of landholders peculiarly honourable, it is no wonder that extent of foreign territory ſhould be an object of vulgar deſire. This diſhoneſt ſpirit, ſtrengthened by the hiſtory of certain nations of antiquity, has involved a number of modern ſtates in a ſyſtem of unreſtrained robbery and murder. Hitherto the power, that eſtabliſhed throughout the univerſe the ſucceſſion of cauſe and effect, has been juſtified by the final ſufferings of thoſe countries, which

ſent

ſent abroad their locuſt ſwarms of plunderers. The puniſhment of the guilty has not indeed effectually operated by way of terror. But accurate enquirers have evinced, that ruin of proſperity is the neceſſary conſequence of conqueſt and colonization. Sugar ſtands at an higher price to the poſſeſſors of ſugar-iſlands, and the proprietors of the Ganges drink their tea twice as dear as the Americans, who poſſeſs not a ſquare rood of oriental territory. However ſucceſsfully the phraſe "OUR FOREIGN POSSESSIONS IN THE EAST AND IN THE WEST," may appeal at once to our pride and avarice, all analogy between an individual-poſſeſſor and a ſtate-poſſeſſor has been ſet aſide by incontrovertible proof; and nations with diſtant territories have been domonſtrated to be in the ſame ſituation as land-owners would be, if on the average of years the rent of eſtates were many times exceeded by the expence of neceſſary repairs. Something might be claimed for the ſake of avoiding the crying ſin of bloodſhed and oppreſſion†, without which no country can be firſt reduced, and afterwards governed for the advantage of another.

† "The (Eaſt India) company require two millions "ſterling to be drawn from Bengal by way of inveſtment, "or to be ſent to Madraſs and Bombay. Yet after all "theſe exactions, they expect the country to flouriſh, "and wonder it does not. Neither the directors nor "managers ſeem to conſider the difference that muſt "unavoidably take place in the ſtate of two countries "governed on diametrically oppoſite principles. This "kingdom is governed with an eye to its own proſperity "and

another. But as the irreſiſtible motive of eventual profit is on the ſide of humanity, that legiſlator who ſhould have deviſed the means of retaining the trade, and reſigning the poſſeſſion, of our unwieldy eaſtern territory, would infallibly have earned the eternal gratitude of his own country as well as of India. Thus would the ruinous conſequences of its ſudden loſs have been prevented: a diſaſter that will as ſurely befal Britain in its turn, as it it has befallen the ſtates whom indignant providence has ſucceſſively beheld wringing gold out of the wretchedneſs of the degraded Hindoos. But this were too much to expect, if not from the genius of an individual, yet from the ſpirit of the age.

Of the plans immediately practicable, the leaſt injurious was without doubt that laid down when Mr. Pitt was the firſt time in office. This plan "was to ſuffer the *patron-*
"*age* to remain in the hands of the Company,
"but to controul them ſo far as to divert their
"attention from the idle ſchemes of power,
"and extenſion of territory, to the more
"ſolid and beneficial views of trade. The
"trade, it is thought, might be extended to
"a very great degree indeed. In a few years
"it might perhaps be increaſed tenfold."*

The

"and advantage. But Bengal is governed with an eye
"not to its own proſperity, but to the proſperity and
"advantage of Great Britain. It is in my opinion ex-
"tremely abſurd to expect the ſame effect from two
"cauſes ſo totally different." Captain Broome *on the charges againſt Mr. Haſtings, p.* 120.

* Lord's Debates, March 19, 1788. Parl. Reg. xxiv. 340.

The legiſlative genius of Mr. Pitt declined the difficulties of this juſter and more ſalutary project. He contented himſelf with introducing a ſyſtem, which in ſhape appears ſo nearly the reverſe of Mr. Fox's, that it might be taken for a mere impreſſion from his reprobated bill. He inſtituted a council, of which the members were nominated by the crown, and removable at pleaſure. The half poſitive and negative powers of *this board of controul*, extend to the government and revenues of India. The directors can ſend no diſpatches to the territorial adminiſtrations, without its counterſign; and the only remedy, in caſe of diſpute, is an appeal to his majeſty in council! The Eaſt India Company ſuffered this bill to paſs without oppoſition. Some of the directors had been reduced by Mr. Fox's bill to the condition of the traveller, who exclaims to the footpad, *take my money and ſpare my life*. Others diſcovered, that Mr. Pitt's "firſt bill darkly conveyed powers to the "board of controul, as hoſtile to the rights "of the Court of Directors as Mr. Fox's bill; "but they had confidence in the admini-"ſtration that introduced it; and had no "doubt of their exerciſing thoſe powers with "gentleneſs and moderation."* The former in their *contentedneſs* for what was left, and the latter in their *confidence* that nothing farther would be taken, loſt all apprehenſions of

——"the ſway,
"That, huſhed in ſly repoſe, expects its Indian prey."

But

* Col. Barre's ſpeech, March 5, 1788.

But what a particular body ſuffered in pride, or power is of ſmall account. The bill which eſtabliſhed the board of controul, and its progeny, the declaratory act of 1788, inflicted on virtue and independence of the whole community an injury greater than they had yet ſuſtained from any ſingle meaſure. When this ſyſtem was in the act of being completed, the evil was foretold. And the warning, as uſual, was neglected. "As to the Crown's "*not* appointing the Commiſſioners for India, "or *not* removing them at pleaſure"—which were proviſions of Mr. Fox's bill——"this "could not be a ſerious objection with *thoſe* "who had complained ſo lately and ſo loudly, "and, it might be added, ſo juſtly againſt "influence; ſince after fifteen years of oppo-"ſition and an unſucceſsful war, the public "had only ſeen the board of green cloth "removed. If the power, now propoſed, "ſhould be given, what time and exertion "would not be called for to recover it? If "this power was capable of erecting a fourth "eſtate, and overturning the conſtitution in "fourth hands, how much more muſt it be "capable of miſchief, if united to one of the "three eſtates, and *that* the CROWN? there "being eleven millions to adminiſter, inclu-"ding the diſpoſition of the landed eſtates in "India."—Again, it had been objected to Mr. Fox, *that his bill would involve the perſonal intereſt, or rather, the perſonal power of a formidable ariſtocracy in the preſervation of our Indian territories at all hazards; which might be attended with the moſt ſerious conſe-*

quences

quences, and expoſe this country not only to certain bankruptcy, but to the being left at a critical moment, almoſt defenceleſs and open to invaſion. " How much ſtronger," it was demanded, " is this reaſoning, when applied " to the crown! In caſe of neceſſity too the " company can now no longer cede po- " ſſeſſions, without including diſhonour to " the crown and nation. The preſent bill " gives likewiſe the whole power to the crown, " the clauſes being no check, and only ren- " dering corruption more neceſſary ..... " The board of controul will obtain the " influence through the agency of the court " of directors, and of the perſons in office " abroad. What is called *the German griev- " ance* would ſoon be repeated; for when the " German princes, who are empowered to " levy troops, but not taxes, want money, they " begin by raiſing troops, and the taxes follow. " So in the precedency, lately eſtabliſhed in " the exciſe and cuſtoms, in favour of a com- " miſſioner at each board, it is not to be " ſuppoſed that *treaſury recommendations* of " individuals will be refuſed, or that the " commiſſioner will ſay *the places in theſe " departments are only to be given in the way " that ſhall preſerve the balance of the " conſtitution.*

" Notoriety of a power exiſting any where " is the beſt check to its exerciſe. Parliament " can be no check, for parliament will be con- " trouled by it..... Happily, " for the conſtitution at leaſt, we loſt America, " as parliament could not have adminiſtered it:

"and it must have destroyed all balance in the "constitution. INDIA is precisely in the situa- "tion AMERICA would have been in, had she "been brought to unconditional submission."*

In 1783 there was published a caricature, representing Karlo Khan making his triumphal entry, on a prodigious elephant, into Leadenhall-street. In 1788 the pencil of truth might have sketched Gulielmo Vizir, at the head of his Indian dependants, sapping the last hold of public virtue. That hold has surrendered. The citizens of London are dragged captive at the conqueror's car. The state-sentinels, who used to give the alarm in times of public danger, and protest against public injustice, are henceforward doomed to silence; nor will they again dare utter

"Word unpleasing to the courtier's ear."

Bountifully as past chancellors of the exchequer behaved towards their monied friends, they have been surpassed by the present. We have just seen Mr. Pitt shovelling gold amain into the coffers of Mr. Boyd and his company of contractors. But an immense Asiatic money-job seems to indicate that he merited, before he acquired, reputation for superior generosity. Had the transaction happened ten years later and nearer home, it would have been the subject of eager popular discussion. The

* Parliamentary Debates, xxiv. p. 306.

The nabob of Arcot had long laboured under a vaſt and multifarious accumulation of debt, which a ſpeaker, well acquainted with the Eaſt, pronounced not merely ſuſpicious, but fraudulent. The whole amounted to near two millions and a half ſterling. Mr. Burke, after ſtating the enormity of the rate of intereſt, the intereſts ſucceſſively added to the capital, the extravagant premiums extorted by the creditors for becoming ſecurity to themſelves, and the colluſive ſupplies of paper-money at two or three per cent. per month, concludes with queſtioning, whether 100,000l. in hard money had been advanced againſt a debt of 880,000l. (Parl. Reg. xviii. 596—620.) It was, on all ſides, acknowledged, that many claims were ſuſpicious.——Adventurers, who left England in no condition to lend or borrow, were obſerved all at once on their arrival in India, to have *potentates for their debtors, to become creditors for millions, and to take provinces in mortgage.* By what contrivance ſecurities were extorted without the delivery of an equivalent, may be in ſome meaſure collected from the debate of February 28, 1785; and the whole ſecret would doubtleſs have tranſpired, if the refuſal of the papers, belonging to this tranſaction, had not ſtifled enquiry. The nabob appears to have been the principal ſufferer by Britiſh gentlemen of prey. There was produced in parliament one of his remonſtrances, in which he ſtates to the court of directors, that certain ſervants of the Eaſt India company, whoſe ſalaries were moderate and who were not engaged in trade, had in a

few years retired to England with ample fortunes: theſe peculators, he avers, had enriched themſelves at his expence by rapine and by fraud. On one occaſion the nabob had borrowed at thirty five per cent. and upwards, granting the lenders aſſignments on his territorial revenues. This enormous debt, liable as it avowedly was, in part, to the fouleſt ſurmiſes, the new commiſſioners of controul ordered to be paid off with "as "much indifference as if it had been a perfect "trifle:" and the houſe of commons, in refuſing to take cognizance of the particulars, inadvertently eſtabliſhed a precedent for the delicacy, ſince obſerved towards the more trivial incumbrances of another prince.

In the debate, Mr. Dundas muſt have reminded every hearer, whoſe Juvenal was not quite obliterated from his memory, of a line on crimination, that has become proverbial. The elder Pliny aſſures Titus that he feels oppreſſed by the *faſces ingenii*—the majeſty of imperial genius. Mr. Dundas endeavours to ſcare away ſuſpicion by ſummoning into his countenance the awfulneſs of his own virtue. He talks of character, with all the confidence of his principal, and undauntedly reproaches his opponents with indifference to their means, if they can but ſupplant "thoſe at "preſent in office, who, ſays he, have their "reputation, their political exiſtence and their "future proſpects, pledged with the public, "as ſecurities for their integrity and good "intentions."

Sir

Sir Thomas Rumbold read a letter from Madraſs to prove, that more than they expected had been done for the creditors; who, in the adjuſtment of the debts, would have been well content to come in ſecond, and not on a equal footing with the company. It was even affirmed, that they had offered to compound by a deduction, not only of the whole intereſt accruing ſince the laſt *conſolidations*, but of 25l. per cent. of the principal. The rumour of a colluſion between the creditors and the board was mentioned in direct terms by Mr. Francis. Nor did Mr. Burke fail to paint this myſterious negociation in the bold colours of his eloquence: "all "the acts and monuments in the records of "peculation—the conſolidated corruption of "ages—the patterns of examplary plunder in "the heroic times of Roman iniquity, never "equalled the gigantic corruption of this "ſingle act. Never did Nero, in all the in-"ſolent prodigality of deſpotiſm, deal out to "his prætorian guards a donation fit to be "named with the largeſs ſhowered down, by "the bounty of the chancellor of the exche-"quer, on the faithful band of his Indian "ſepoys."

From Hindoſtan, where, by a ſingle act, (which the perpetrator ſhall think "perfectly "reconcileable with his duty, that is, conſonant "to the intereſt of his maſters"†) an entire

† Captain Broome's *elucidation of the charges againſt Mr. Haſtings.*

people

people may be uprooted from its ſeat, and a whole region converted into a jungle for wild beaſts—From this vaſt theatre of iniquity, and unfailing fountain of corruption, I turn with pleaſure to a tranſaction, free from thoſe cruelties which the inſane deſire of gain has coupled with various branches of our trade. I ſpeak of the commercial treaty with France, the genuine offspring of that beneficent philoſophy, which had long been occupied in enquiring, how humankind might derive the largeſt ſhare of enjoyment from the bleſſings of nature and the productions of art. The doctrine having diveſted France and Britain of many mutually injurious prejudices, to introduce a more liberal ſyſtem of intercourſe between the two countries was only to fulfil the wiſhes of both. The event was expected with great anxiety by our merchants. For in the new ſyſtem of communication which was to take its date from the peace, they anticipated a compenſation for the loſſes of war. That period was characterized by a ſtateſman deeply ſkilled in political œconomy‡, as "the æra "of proteſtantiſm in trade." "All Europe," ſaid he, "appears eager to throw off the vile "ſhackles of ignorant, oppreſſive monopoly— "I avow that monopoly is *always* unwiſe. But "if there be a nation under heaven, which "ought to be the firſt to reject monopoly, it "is the ENGLISH. All that we have to covet, "is free trade and fair equality. With more "induſtry, with more enterprize, with more

‡ Lord's Debates, Feb. 17, 1783.

"capital

" capital than any nation upon earth, it ought " to be our conſtant cry—*let every market be* " *open, let us meet our rivals fairly, and we aſk* " *no more.*"

In ſuch an undertaking a Britiſh miniſter has many inducements to exert himſelf. The moſt powerful is this. In time of peace he can plume himſelf on nothing ſo much as on promoting trade; and if he can contrive to ſeem buſy in commercial concerns, the modeſt ſimplicity of the people will eaſily allow of a general perſuaſion, that the effect of their collective induſtry is the workmanſhip of the miniſter.

The preſent is, in all points of view, one of thoſe caſes, where he that performs the ſmalleſt part of the ſervice is ſure to carry away almoſt the whole of the credit. The reaſonings of Tucker, Hume, and Smith had created a liberality of opinion, which, in the fulneſs of time, muſt infallibly produce a correſponding liberality of practice. Our neighbours, for their own accommodation, were eager to throw open their ports to our manufactures. The temper of the age diſdainfully rejected the ancient jealouſy of communication, and determined ſtupidity alone can ſuppoſe that any one of our eminent politicians could have failed to take advantage of the conjuncture.

Whether Mr. Pitt's dexterity was ſuch as no competitor could have manifeſted, we cannot certainly know. But there are circumſtances upon which a probable deciſion may

may be grounded.—The influx of Engliſh wares, we know, obliged France to abandon certain branches of induſtry; and there were thoſe who regarded this immediate conſequence of the negociation, as a ſure proof of the ability with which it had been conducted. But this, I fear, was judging in the ſpirit of the tricking bargain-driver, rather than of the merchant, who underſtands his permanent intereſt. A trading people ought to acknowledge no obligation to the miniſter who opens a vein of trade, unleſs it can be worked for generations with the proſpect of a juſt and conſtant return.

If French workmen were partially thrown out of employment, becauſe a change of circumſtances rendered the ſame ſtock with the ſame capital capable, by a different application, of procuring more commodities from abroad than it could produce at home, a momentary inconvenience would indeed be felt, but the ſecondary effect would be durably and nationally beneficial. In fact, "the greater the "diſtreſs of workmen, on the abolition of "commercial reſtrictions, the ſtronger the "proof of the neceſſity of ſuch abolition, as "it demonſtrates the poſſibility of a more "proper application of ſtock"*.

Should any one be ſtill diſpoſed to meaſure the merit of the framer of the treaty by the uncompenſated injury it occaſioned to French manufactures, I intreat him not to withdraw his

* Cauſes of the advance and decline of nations. P. 23. Johnſon.

attention

attention from the neceſſary progreſs of conſequences. Our new cuſtomers, provided they are faithful to the conditions, will become poorer and poorer: that is, a ſcheme, deviſed for the increaſe of commerce, ſhall directly tend to its annihilation.—If the parchment tie, which had never ſtrength to bind rival nations beyond the obligation of intereſt, ſhould be broken, ſhall we conſent to alter the terms? The neceſſity of ſpeedy alteration would furniſh no preſumption of their excellence.—Perhaps we ſhall attempt to inforce their obſervance by the only mode of deciding differences, yet diſcovered among nations? In this caſe, how many campaigns will be ſupported by the profits of that, which by the ſuppoſition muſt have been a languiſhing, trade? And what, in the end, would be the thanks due to our miniſter for over-reaching Monſieur Vergennes?—It is thought by ſome that the revolution anticipated a determination, on the part of France, to break the treaty at all hazards. Others pretend that our management with France alarmed the Spaniards out of a diſpoſition to enter into better terms with us. To open the vaſt countries of South America to our traders, would have been, doubtleſs, more glorious than to ſtrike with a ſtate that already held out its hand to us. Should the Americans find addreſs to overcome the jealouſy of the Spaniſh court, Mr. Pitt, I am afraid, will be in imminent danger of ſome loſs of reputation,

even among thoſe who have pronounced his, the oldeſt head, that ever ſtood on young ſhoulders.

The termination of the war brought our mercantile communication with the ſtates of America to be ſettled by the ability of our cabinet. This was an affair, in ſome of its circumſtances leſs familiarized to the minds of common men, than the new terms of the French treaty. The firſt thing to be determined was, the principle of future intercourſe —whether pride or prudence, amity or reſentment? Lord Shelburne, as appears from the king's ſpeech of December 1782, had decided in favour of the conciliatory plan. "Religion, language, intereſt, affections," ſays his majeſty, "may and, I hope, will yet "prove a bond of permanent union between "the two countries." By the ſubſequent acceſſion and downfall of the coalition-miniſtry, this weighty tranſaction came, like ſo many others, to be adjuſted by Mr. Pitt, in chief. One may aſſign twenty reaſons for rejoicing on both ſides the Atlantic, that the buſineſs was reſerved for one, who had as much of the equal kindneſs of an arbitrator, as was not inconſiſtent with the inflexible fidelity of a patriot; one who was bleſſed with a heart to feel—aye, and a tongue to talk—for the great community of mankind; of one too, who knew what to think of that malignant ſyſtem of jealous regulation, which denies

denies enjoyments to the people among whom it is in force, that it may withhold wealth from their neighbours. Animated by general and particular benevolence, the youthful guardian of Britain's proſperity preſented a bill for re-eſtabliſhing the former beneficial intercourſe between America and the iſlands†. Its conſideration was poſtponed and reſúmed innumerable times. Prejudice continually thwarted this attempt to revive cordiality between the mother and daughter ſtates: and it is painful to relate that ſo much ſkill and care failed to ſplice the broken cords of affection. Mr. Pitt finally put the taſk out of his hands, or rather delivered it over to Mr. Jenkinſon. I need not ſay how aſtoniſhingly this gentleman is qualified for a diſputant among the doctors of the board of trade. If report tell true, he knows within leſs than a dozen, how many groſs of minnikins are every year headed in the Glouceſter pin-manufactories. Calling to mind how little the language of indulgence had profited, and ſeeing with what inſolence the Americans

Old England's proffered grace defied,

this ſage politician deemed it high time for England

To change her tone, and check their pride.

In his opening ſpeech, he deſcribed the temper of theſe froward provinces, which had lately ventured upon the raſh ſcheme of ſelf-government. His tone was ſuch as a prudent

† See Edwards's Weſt-Indies. Second Edition.

parent employs in warning his ſon againſt intimacy with a ſchool-fellow, who bids fair to begin the world in prodigality and end it in beggary. "They had *no* trade, he ſaid†, "with Portugal, and *ſtill leſs* with Spain. "Into the Mediterranean they durſt not "venture for fear of corſairs. From France "and its colonies, their principal articles, "tobacco excepted, were expreſsly excluded. "They had no market for their ſalt-fiſh, "except the Britiſh ſettlements, and yet they "inſolently refuſed to ſuffer Britiſh veſſels "to fetch this commodity from their ports. "The return they made for our favour was "by prohibitions more ſevere than againſt any "other country. The inſtructions, ſent by "particular ſtates to Congreſs, were, for the "moſt part, extremely abſurd. One ſtate "moſt ridiculouſly recommends articles of "commerce with Great Britain to be ſigned, "*when Congreſs were unanimous!*"

The imprudent conduct of America towards other ſtates, and the conſequences of that imprudence, have, no doubt, fully juſtified this ſharp leſſon. Meanwhile, our ſenatorial Mentor concluded, that it would be moſt expedient to leave this ungrateful people "ample leiſure to conſider, how much their "own intereſt depended on the encourage-"ment of Britiſh commerce:" and he contented himſelf with moving for leave to bring in a bill for the continuance of the former

† Parl. Reg. xix. 117. Feb. 17, 1786.

pro-

proviſional act. He mentioned the very violent complaints that had been made againſt the reſtrictions, "confining importation into "the Weſt India iſlands to Britiſh-built veſ-"ſels." He aſſured the houſe that theſe complaints were abſolutely groundleſs, adding that the preſent regulations produced *very agreeable effects*, both with reſpect to the plantations and the empire at large.

Mr. Jenkinſon's ſatisfaction did not communicate itſelf to the parties intereſted. In that, which he deſigned as a wholeſome correction for the United States, they foreſaw a terrible chaſtiſement to the unoffending inhabitants of the Britiſh ſettlements. The American colonies had formerly poured their ſuper-abundant produce into the boſom of the Weſt India iſlands without reſtraint. The cultivator depended upon America for food and for many materials, neceſſary to the fabrication of his implements. In the years 1771, 1772, and 1773, official accounts from the Britiſh cuſtom-houſe exhibit an importation, equal to more than two millions of buſhels of wheat and other grain, into the ſugar-iſlands from America. They enumerate large quantities of twenty articles beſides, almoſt all of prime neceſſity for conſumption or cultivation†. The ſupply, after the alienation of America, being reſtricted to Britiſh-built veſſels, ſcarcity of every ſpecies gradually crept into the iſlands, and increaſed ſo prodigiouſly, that in Jamaica alone, according to the committee of the aſſembly‡, in the ſix years preceding

† Edward's Hiſt. of the Weſt Indies. B. vi. Ch. 4.

‡ Ibid.

1787,

1787, there periſhed between downright famine and inſufficient nouriſhment, not leſs than 15,000 negroes.

No reproach, however, lies with the regulators of our commercial concerns. They hoped for better things! And if the hurricanes raged, if it was neceſſary to tranſport flour from the Thames to the St. Lawrence, if Canada could afford no ſure ſupplies, if Nova Scotia (in ſpite of its ideal *dairy farms*, and *garden vegetables**) did not, within three years, furniſh "great quantities of lumber and "moſt of the other articles which the Weſt "Indies wanted from America," if the Britiſh carriers could not ſecure to themſelves the ancient profits of the provincials, if the coloniſts were driven by hunger to the leaſt productive ſpecies of labour, if the planters became the prey of monopoliſts, if, in fine, the grand difficulty—which God himſelf has inlaid into his creation—of making laws near the pole, fit to be obeyed within the tropics, could not be ſurmounted, we may be ſure that many of theſe untoward circumſtances were contrary to the expectations, and all to the wiſhes, of the advocates for the prohibitory ſyſtem. And from this perſuaſion, the miſerable and the compaſſionate are equally at liberty to derive what conſolation they may reſpectively require!

From the firſt, compared with the ſucceeding, ſteps in this buſineſs, a perſonal charge may ſeem to ariſe againſt Mr. Pitt. But it is

* Edward's Hiſt. ii. 409.

eaſy

eaſy to vindicate his conſiſtency. The principle of accommodation was the guide of his whole conduct. He deſired to be in amity with America: And his original partners in power feeling the ſame diſpoſition, he was at full liberty to give way to his benevolent propenſity. But his ſecond ſet of aſſociates had no predilection either for the "more en-"larged ideas of the preſent age*," or for America: and when, after lying perdue for ſome time, they diſcovered the unworthineſs of the thirteen ſtates, what was Mr. Pitt to do? You would not ſurely adviſe a man to break with his neareſt connections for the ſake of indulging a romantic fondneſs for ſtrangers. If we muſt have enemies, let us, at leaſt, have them at a diſtance; and by all means ſtrive to make thoſe about us our friends.

The man, who found himſelf obliged to give up the American negociation, cannot be expected to have rolled ſmoothly forwards to the conſummation of a new contract with Ireland. Were all impediments to ſuch an enterprize, real and imaginary, drawn out at length, they would probably be ſeen to exceed thoſe that obſtructed our political union with Scotland. Mr. Pitt had to ſtruggle againſt a violent and long-continued oppoſition. A minute inveſtigation of his whole conduct on this ſingle occaſion would, I think, of itſelf enable the judicious reader to decide concerning his capacity for ſuperintending the

* Mr. Pitt's ſpeech, Feb. 22, 1785. Parl. Reg. xvii. 250.

affairs

affairs of a commercial people. A ſummary of the principal facts may convince thoſe who are kept aloof from theſe diſquiſitions by an opinion of their endleſs uncertainty, that by reſearch and reflection it is practicable to form a ſafe judgment concerning the qualities of public actions. The rules of moral probability apply univerſally, though the data may be more or leſs familiar. But with regard to a miniſter who has had the direction of any great national concern, there muſt always exiſt ſuch data as need not leave us in more uncertainty, than with regard to a private man; and beyond your own door, there can be hardly a private character ſo well worth ſtudying.

Eleven reſolutions, or propoſitions, as they are more commonly called, after paſſing the Iriſh parliament, were brought before our houſe of commons. Theſe propoſitions, if not the produce of Mr. Pitt's pen, muſt have had his private ſanction, before their appearance in Ireland; and on their introduction here, they received it publicly, in terms of as full approbation as the language could well ſupply. After a ſeries of vehement debates, twenty reſolutions paſſed both houſes of Parliament. The alterations they underwent will be beſt underſtood from an abſtract of both. The principal among the new proviſions I have diſtinguiſhed by the italic character. And he, who would form clear ideas on this deciſive meaſure, muſt ſubmit to the taſk of reading each ſeries deliberately.

Iriſh

Iriſh Propoſitions.

1 *Prop.* Declares it to be highly important to encourage and extend the trade between Ireland and Great Britain by a final ſettlement on equitable and mutually beneficial principles.

2. All foreign articles to be imported from one kingdom into the other at the ſame duties as when directly imported. Duties, paid on importation into the country that exports again into the other, to be fully drawn back.

3. No prohibition to exiſt againſt any product of either country. Duty on importing any article to be the ſame in each country, except where an addition is neceſſary to countervail a duty on internal conſumption.

4. Where duties on articles, the product of either country, are different on importation into the other, they ſhall be reduced, where they are higheſt, to the amount payable in the other: and all ſuch articles ſhall be exportable again from the kingdom into which they ſhall be firſt imported, as free from duty as the ſimilar commodities or home manufacture of the ſame kingdom.

5. Internal duties may be compenſated by an equal duty on importation.

6. No prohibitions or new duties to be hereafter impoſed in either kingdom on the

Engliſh Reſolutions.

1 *Reſ.* Similar declaration.

2. Full participation of commercial advantages to be ſecured to Ireland, whenever ſhe provides for defraying the expences of the empire in proportion to her growing proſperity. See *Reſ.* 20.

3. Foreign articles *(except from the countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope to the ſtraits of Magellan)* to pay duties on importation from one country to the other, as if directly imported from abroad. All duties on the firſt importation *(except on arrack and foreign brandy, and on rum, and all ſorts of ſtrong waters, not imported from the Britiſh Weſt India iſlands)* to be fully drawn back.

4. All laws made or *to be made* in Great Britain for ſecuring excluſive privileges to the ſhips and mariners of Great Britain, Ireland, and the Britiſh colonies, as alſo for regulating the trade of thoſe colonies to be likewiſe paſſed by the Iriſh parliament. Theſe laws to enact the ſame privileges and reſtraints for the ſubjects of each kingdom.

5. All Britiſh colonial goods to be ſubject to the ſame duties on importation into Ireland as into Great Britain. *All that are prohibited by Great Britain to be prohibited by Ireland.*

6. Goods imported from one kingdom into the other to be ſubject to the ſame

Propoſitions.

importation of any article, the product of the other, except duties to countervail duties on internal conſumption.

7. No prohibition or new duty to be hereafter impoſed in either kingdom on the exportation of any article of native growth or manufacture from thence to the other, except on corn, &c. and alſo except there now exiſts any prohibition not reciprocal, or any duty not equal in both kingdoms. In ſuch caſes the prohibition may be made reciprocal, and the duties raiſed to equality.

8. No bounty to be payable on the exportation of any article from the one kingdom to the other, except on corn, &c. and except ſuch bounties as are in the nature of drawbacks. No duty to be granted in Ireland on the exportation of any article imported from the Britiſh plantations, unleſs a ſimilar bounty exiſt in Great Britain, or unleſs ſuch bounty be as a drawback of duties over and above ſuch duties as are laid on the article in Great Britain.

9. Importation of foreign articles to be ſo regulated from time to time, as to give advantage to the importation of ſimilar articles, the product of either kingdom, from that kingdom

10. Accumulation of Iriſh debt to be prevented: and the annual Iriſh revenue to

Reſolutions.

bonds, &c. as in paſſing from one port of Great Britain to another.

7. Enjoins troubleſome obſervances reſpecting Weſt-India goods imported into Great Britain from Ireland.

8. All goods, exported from Ireland to any Britiſh poſſeſſion abroad, to be put from time to time under ſuch regulation *that they ſhall never be exported from Ireland with leſs encumbrance of impoſitions than the like goods from Great Britain.*

9. So long as the parliament of Great Britain ſhall think fit to continue the Eaſt India company's charter, *no goods of the countries included in that charter ſhall be imported into Ireland but through Great Britain, and ſo long ſhall Ireland be prohibited from trading to any part in thoſe countries.*

10. No prohibition to exiſt in one country againſt the produce or manufactures of the other, except corn, meal, malt, flour, and biſcuits, and with ſome other exceptions. *N. B.* This *Reſ.* and the 11th 12th 13th and 14th correſpond, in part, to *Prop.* 4—8. They are chiefly deſigned to regulate the mutual importation of the products of either country.

15. No bounty to be granted in either kingdom on the exportation of any article to the other, except corn, &c. *except the bounties at pre-*

Propoſitions.	*Reſolutions.*
be made equal to its annual expenditure.	*ſent given by Great Britain on the exportation of beer and diſtilled ſpirits to Ireland!*
11. The exceſs of the groſs hereditary revenue of Ireland (after deducting drawbacks, repayments, or bounties in the nature of drawbacks) above 656,000l. in each year of peace, wherein the annual revenues ſhall be equal to the annual expences, ſhall be appropriated to ſupport the naval force of the empire, in ſuch manner as the Iriſh parliament ſhall direct. In wartime no regard to be had to the equality between the annual reveuue and expences.	16. Where goods from America are ſubject in Great Britain to higher duties than the like goods from the plantations, theſe higher duties *ſhall be impoſed* on ſuch American goods imported into Ireland. 17. Continues the eſtabliſhed protection to Engliſh copy rights againſt importation of Iriſh-printed books, &c. 18. The ſame with reſpect to Engliſh patents. 19. Adviſes to take meaſures for preventing diſputes reſpecting the right of fiſhing. 20. The appropriation of the groſs hereditary revenue of Ireland (after deducting drawbacks, &c.) above 656,000l. to the ſupport of the navy, as the Iriſh parliament ſhall direct, ſhall be deemed a ſatisfactory proviſion (proportioned to the growing proſperity of Ireland) towards defraying the expences of the empire, in time of peace.

In the addreſs moved by Mr. Pitt, and carried July 22, 1785, the foregoing alterations are thus announced: "We have pro-
"ceeded on the foundation of the Iriſh
"propoſitions; but, in conſidering ſo exten-
"ſive an arrangement we have found it

" neceſſary to introduce ſome modifications " and exceptions; and we have added ſuch " regulations and conditions, as appeared to " us indiſpenſably neceſſary for eſtabliſhing " the propoſed agreement on juſt and equitable " principles, and for ſecuring to both countries " thoſe commercial advantages, to an equal " enjoyment of which they are in future to " be entitled."

It is however obvious that the ſecond does not differ from the firſt code merely in ſuperior accuracy of definition, more perſpicuous order, juſter derivation of its conditions from the parent principle, or in the inſertion of certain new, but not heterogeneous, articles. The whole body and ſpirit of the doctrine is changed. At firſt, Ireland was allowed " the liberty of importing the importable " produce of all countries†, directly into " England." But the amended covenant for the promiſed conceſſions ſubſtitutes everlaſting reſtrictions, and a ſtep-mother's jealouſy for foſtering affection. It *modifies* equality into controul, liberality into ſelfiſhneſs, emancipation unto a renewal of the ancient bondage. Without being admitted to participation in proſperity, Ireland is coupled with England as a yoke-fellow in adverſity. The altered

† Mr. Pitt's opening ſpeech. Parl. Reg. xvii. 251. There ſeems to have been much perplexity as to India, after the Eaſt India company's exiſting charter ſhould expire. See Parl. Reg. xviii. p. 286, 352, and 560. Loud oppoſition aroſe from the apprehended ſacrifice of the monopoly of the Eaſt India trade. At length, Ireland was eternally debarred from the Eaſt Indies.

conditions

conditions perpetuate to England all her advantages, to Ireland all her diſadvantages. They bind her never to trade beyond the cape of Good Hope, or the ſtraits of Magellan—not to receive the produce of foreign plantations at all, nor of Britiſh plantations or of America, but as Britain ſhould preſcribe. By one of the deviations, Britain takes care to continue bounties to her breweries and diſtilleries in hoſtility to thoſe of Ireland; and by another ſhe deprives the ſiſter kingdom of the power of guarding her native raw materials. If to fund her preſent, or provide for a future debt, ſhe ſhould advance her colony duties, Ireland, to prevent her manufactories from deriving an advantage, from lower duties, muſt advance hers alſo; by which management the increaſe of Iriſh taxes would afford a ſecurity againſt the too rapid growth of Iriſh manufactures.

By ſuch arguments, thoſe who in Ireland had been moſt friendly to the eleven *propoſitions*, were rendered the moſt hoſtile to the twenty *reſolutions*. The miniſterial party, with difficulty, eluded a parliamentary vote of cenſure. Never did a meaſure, perhaps, in either kingdom excite ſuch vehement diſguſt; never was the fruit of ſo many legiſlative vigils ſo ſuddenly blaſted by popular indignation.

Mr. Pitt obtained, and he ſtill from time to time receives‡, applauſe on account of certain liberal obſervations, with which he

‡ Mem. G. III. iv. 62.

prefaced

prefaced his commercial project. He fiercely reprobated the policy of former Engliſh miniſters, as it unjuſtly "tended to debar "Ireland from the enjoyment and uſe of her "own reſources, and to make her compleatly "ſubſervient to the intereſt and opulence of "this country". And he performed, I doubt not, the part of recitation well. But my admiration is loath to come, when called to a man for merely reciting excellent matter, which has been already fifty times printed†. When a pariſh prieſt communicates ſound to the dead letter of a ſermon of Dr. Blair, am I to reverence *him* for the piety of his ſentiments?

If it be demanded how the guſts of oppoſition, or the gentler impulſe of a friend's perſuaſion‡ could drive Mr. Pitt on the "old "unprofitable ſyſtem"*, which he appeared ſo reſolute to ſhun, various conjectural anſwers may be given. But ſtrong circumſtantial evidence ſeems to prove, that *he was deſtitute of* KNOWLEDGE, *the only ſure anchor for keeping the mind ſteady*. Had he poſſeſſed more than a vague opinion of the ſuperiority of the *ſyſtem of equality* over *that of ſubſervience*,

† "To prohibit a great body of people from making "all they can of every part of their produce, or from "employing their ſtock and induſtry in the way they "judge moſt advantageous to themſelves, is a manifeſt "violation of the moſt ſacred rights of mankind." Dr. Ad. Smith.

‡ Parl. Reg. xvii. 285. "It would be wholly unjuſt to withhold the merit of ſome of the alterations from the inſtruction, ſo generouſly adminiſtered by the r. h. gentleman (Mr. Jenkinſon), in the hour of neceſſity." *Mr. Fox.*

* Ibid. 253. Mr. Pitt's ſpeech.

he

he would not have recommended firſt the one and then the other, like an hired advocate, who at different times defends oppoſite ſides in ſimilar cauſes. When we hear a man contending (Feb. 25, 1784), that Britain would not be injured by permitting Ireland to introduce merchandize circuitouſly, and ten weeks afterwards recommending a ſtring of reſolutions, by which this very danger is ſolicitouſly guarded againſt, can we ſet him down as maſter of the tendency and bearings of either ſcheme? And when we find him repeating the ſame inconſiſtencies, are we to judge him beſt qualified to rehearſe common places, or to bring uſeful meaſures to bear?

Mr. Pitt had certainly looked into political arithmeticians and political œconomiſts. But does it follow that he had a well-digeſted fund of practical information on political arithmetic and œconomy? Some readers, we know, bring away from a good book, only a vague ſentiment of approbation. Others will talk plauſibly of its contents. But between this degree of proficiency and—that, which in all arts is the higheſt attainment—the ability to apply principles to particular caſes, the interval is immenſe. And is it impoſſible to ſeparate the ſhew from the ſubſtance of political wiſdom?

It may be argued, that Mr. Pitt might have been in the condition of Galileo, to whoſe recantation neither his conſcience nor underſtanding conſented. This alternative I ſhall not directly controvert. There remain other

acts

acts of his adminiſtration to be conſidered; and let analogy decide, for which of theſe two reaſons, or whether for both, he tampered ſo long in vain with America and with Ireland.

To render the commerce even of Ireland retrograde, after the reſtoration of peace, the moſt wily politician would not have found an eaſy undertaking. For the increaſing exertions of individuals would probably have more than counteracted the moſt miſchievous interpoſition. Though the Engliſh edition, therefore, of the *propoſitions* had been adopted, intelligent induſtry would have gone on—as it has gone on without them—to enlarge the demand for tonnage to tranſport its productions. In this caſe can the reader be at a loſs to name the perſon, who, with the utmoſt ſelf-complacency, would have ſaid,—"Mr. "Speaker, I have the ſatisfaction to announce "the flouriſhing eſtate of the ſiſter-kingdom. "Gentlemen, Sir, will recollect under whoſe "adminiſtration thoſe propoſitions were "ſettled." How few, either gentle or ſimple, but would have reaſoned like certain politicians upon a remarkable event of the ſixteenth century!

In the reign of queen Elizabeth, there lived, at the end of a ſmall village in South Wales, an old woman who gained her livelihood by going on errands to Brecknock. She ſtooped; her laſt remaining front-tooth projected into view; ſhe was blind of one eye and blear of the other. Such a figure could not fail to ſet ſurmiſes afloat. One evening

ſhe

ſhe was met by a furious blaſt on her return home. Next morning, her better eye was ſo much affected by a violent rheum, that ſhe was forced to keep cloſe in her cottage for ſome time. Meanwhile news arrives of the diſaſter of the Spaniſh fleet. In the ardour of ſpeculation it occurs that the old woman has not been lately ſeen at her uſual houſes of call; and it is ſoon diſcovered that ſhe had not appeared out of her own doors. "Aye, "aye," ſaid the politicians of Brecknock, "we thought, ſure enough, all along, there "was ſomething in it! Old Margery has "not kept herſelf pent up all this while for "nothing. Theſe hurricanes were certainly "of her raiſing.

"It is the cunning woman—the cunning "woman of Llanbamlog, that has done for "the *papiſhes*."

A committee, appointed in 1789 to enquire *into the illicit practices uſed in defrauding the revenue*, in their report of March 23, declare "tea to be the chief ſupport of that com- "bined ſyſtem of force and fraud which is "employed with ſo much ſucceſs againſt our "revenue." They ſpeak of the advantage of an "equitable and productive ſubſtitute "for the preſent tax upon tea;" adding that "it has been ſuggeſted to your committee, "that if an account were taken of all houſes "in the kingdom liable to the window tax,

" which conſume tea, the preſent produce of " the tea duties might be aſſeſſed and rated " upon the windows of ſuch houſes."

Mr. Pitt followed theſe ſuggeſtions, but in ſtating his propoſition (June 21, 1784) he aſſerted it to be " in a great degree new." This boaſtful phraſe gave riſe to a critical diſcuſſion. The chairman of the ſmuggling committee complained of the injuſtice of the pretence, ſince he and his aſſociates, in a printed report, had ſeveral months ago explained to Parliament " *every circumſtance*, which the " right honourable gentleman had brought " forward*." He added that " the idea had " firſt been patronized by Lord John Cavendiſh " when chancellor of the exchequer, under " whoſe auſpices the committee had begun " their enquiry†. Another member ſaid " it " was not ingenuous in the right honourable " gentlemen to aſſume a merit which *he muſt* " *know* did not belong to him‡." The right honourable gentleman, according to the report of that debate, made no reply to the firſt charge. He noticed the ſecond ſo far as to own that " he had heard that the laſt admini- " ſtration had ideas in ſome degree correſpon- " dent to thoſe he had communicated §: but " as to the two bills mentioned by Mr. " Sheridan as actually framed according to " the plan now under conſideration, he de- " clared he had been told of their exiſtence " only a few days before, and had never ſeen " them."

* Parl. Reg. xv. p. 223. † Id. ib. 236.
‡ Ibid. § p. 237.

The whole meaſure, having produced its full effect, and ſmuggling, "if not knocked "on the head at once," as Lord Sheffield promiſed, having languiſhed ever ſince, the miniſter, though he was ſupplied by others with arms and ſtrength for the combat, has been vulgarly regarded as the champion who maimed the monſter. We learn from Madame Roland's *appeal*, that the celebrated M. Robeſpierre, in the early part of his public conduct, made a common practice of producing in public as his own, the ſuggeſtions he heard thrown out by his friends* in private. It is probable that the ſtratagem materially contributed to give him conſequence with the people. The fact deſerves the notice of thoſe, who are in ſearch of hiſtorical parallels.

For future operations of finance, a great advantage was gained by this tranſpoſition of taxes. For no engagement having been contracted not to increaſe the reduced duties in future, tea will bear a conſiderable advance without danger of the ſame ſyſtem of fraud on the revenue being immediately re-eſtabliſhed.

To the *commutation act*, however convenient in its conſequences, a numerous claſs in ſociety, that ſtruggles hard to reach a few of the comforts of life, may aſcribe one privation the more. It has ſpread gloom and introduced

* Le premier à la tribune, il faiſoit valoir les raiſons qu' il avoit entendu ex poſer la veille par ſes amis..... On n' etoit jamais sûr que Robeſpierre ne viendroit pas prevenir inconſidérément les tentatives par l' envie de ſ en attribuer l' honneur. i. 62.

diſeaſe into many an airy and healthy country habitation. In ſmall towns and villages, where houſes are conſtructed with ranges of windows, commanding the offices contiguous to the dwelling, its miſerable effects are fully apparent in the multitude of lights ſtopped up†. The neceſſity however of an effectual check to ſmuggling was urgent. In the choice, to which the miniſter was reduced, of evils he could perhaps do no better than adopt the ideas of the committee. To luxuries he could not truſt for a revenue of more than half a million ſterling.

This difficulty was a conſequence of previous wilful extravagance. Had not "the "people been deceived into the American "war," the miſchiefs of ſmuggling would not have been ſo ſeverely felt, and the taxes on teas might have been lowered with a ſmall ſubſtitute, or with none. It is uſual to ſpeak of war as leaving behind it *an increaſe of burdens*, but by this phraſe the truth is ſhrowded inſtead of ſhewn. We ought to ſay, that by its ſecondary operation it ſaddens the exiſtence, and ſhortens the life, of thouſands, beſides thoſe who are duped or forced into its immediate ſervice.

The moment, however, its immediate horrors are paſt, we ſet to conſole ourſelves with old ſaws, *Heaven be praiſed, the danger is over*, and *All's well that ends well*. "But "will you not pauſe awhile, and obſerve whe-"ther the fever of ſociety may not have left an

† Mem. G. III. iv.

"incurable

" incurable languor behind? The evils, it is " true, moſt ſhocking to our untutored feel- " ings are paſt—but have we not to encounter " evils, almoſt equally formidable from their " duration? To make good the anticipated " revenue, muſt not the poor forego a part of " that ſuſtenance which is eſſential to health, " and the rich a part of that income, which " would have furniſhed the means of knowledge " to curioſity, of gratification to benevolence, " of innocent indulgence to the hour of lei- " ſure? See then how many *irremediable* " calamities, beſides the deſtruction of life " and the loſs of limb, follow in the train of " war! If but a tenth part of the expence " were beſtowed on public works!..... " and in what works might it not have been " better employed, even had it gone to erect " the famous fortifications with which it was " ſo difficult to prevent a noble projector, " ſeconded by Mr. Pitt's eloquence and per- " tinacity, from encumbering the iſland?.. " .... And in eighteen years we have ſuffered " ourſelves to be twice raſhly involved in the " moſt expenſive and conſuming of modern " wars! We have ſoon repented our credulity, " but puſillanimity in our change of opinion " keeps the raſhneſs of our firſt proceeding in " countenance, and we make no effort to " ſtop the bootleſs effuſion of treaſure and of " blood!"

In the golden days of aſtrology there was much virtue in ſtrange ſounds; and they retain much virtue ſtill. The mere vocabulary of

of the budget has probably occaſioned the capacity of ſome chancellors of the exchequer, during their hour, to be extolled above the third heaven. Of all men, miniſters, I believe moſt eaſily obtain unmerited applauſe, and of all miniſters, thoſe who preſide over the myſteries of revenue, for ſuch is the averſion of the public to arithmetic, that the cleareſt detection of a fraudulent ſtatement cannot be made generally underſtood.

The following proceſs will help to explain, how a perſon, occupying the vantage ground of office, may reap in admiration what he has never ſown in ſervices. An individual in private life conceives an ingenious financial project. Calculation demonſtrates its efficacy. The arguments in its favour are repeated till its practicability is univerſally acknowledged. The time for looking out for new reſources arrives. Orders are iſſued to the clerks of office to array the familiar and approved plan in a parliamentary garb. And now the ſtage is prepared for the miniſter with his opening ſpeech; and he has only to exhibit a little arithmetic in a frame of rhetoric. By which he will ſo tranſport that part of the community, whoſe ſphere of intellectual viſion extends not beyond the paſſing moment, that they, good ſouls! ſhall ſet heartily to pity their forefathers for having come into the world before the preſent miraculous exhibition. Such is the way in which great men contrive to paſs for great men! The follow-

following remark was drawn from a celebrated ſpeaker by a favourite modern ſcene in this ſtyle. "The miniſter takes every method to "perſuade the country that he is not only "the perſon who can pay off the national "debt, but the ſole inventor of a plan for "the reduction of that debt; that it never "had been thought of, till he came into power "to put it into practice; and that it origina-"ted entirely with him;—The Right Hon-"ourable Gentleman however, and many in "this houſe, know the contrary*."

Theſe expreſſions refer to the eſtabliſhment of a new *ſinking fund*, for at length Mr Pitt, by divine favour and human aſſiſtance, did actually eſtabliſh ſomething. And he muſt be allowed to have availed himſelf with dexterity of that anxiety for the extinction of the public debt, which had diſturbed the repoſe of Engliſhmen for half a century, but which ſeems at laſt to have merged in the tranquillity of deſpair. *A dialogue between the chancellor of the exchequer and the ghoſt of Dr. Price* might poſſibly be the beſt form for exhibiting the origin and progreſs of this celebrated ſcheme. Simplicity and fineſſe, modeſty and preſumption, ſhallowneſs and ſcience, philanthropy and ſelfiſhneſs are not more ſtrongly contraſted than the two parties concerned. One had been occupied for years in the laborious computation of finance without an eye to popularity or profit. The other

* Parliamentary Regiſter, xxxi. 236, Feb. 17, 1792.

wanted

wanted to borrow, without intereſt or acknowledgement, ſo much information as would enſure to him the continuance of public confidence. A lively repreſentation of their reſpective views, motives and qualifications would, I fancy, charm away that ſenſe of repugnance, which a page or two, filled with long rows of figures, muſt otherwiſe unavoidably excite. Without abandoning the intention of ſuch a dialogue, I muſt for the preſent content myſelf with giving the argument.

Sir Robert Walpole claims the merit of eſtabliſhing a ſinking fund of ſuch efficiency, that if its operation had not been interrupted, it would have paid off 136,000,000l. above twenty years ago. In 1773, Lord North announced to the houſe of commons a plan for the ſame purpoſe. But the American war ſoon found him employment of a kind, that would appear, from the whole tenor of modern hiſtory, far more congenial to the nature of an Engliſh miniſter than liquidation of debt. In 1782, the king's ſpeech expreſſed the hope of a gradual diſcharge of our incumbrances by a fixed courſe of payment. The immediate execution of the plan (which Dr. Price publiſhed ſoon afterwards) was prevented by the ſhort-lived ſucceſs of the coalition—a meaſure prolific of endleſs calamities, and to be lamented even for depriving the people of the poor advantage of *an oppoſition*, as an inſtrument for giving effect to their ardent and united wiſhes. When

When Mr. Pitt, exalted in honour, and radiating with a ſort of ſaint-like glory, entered a ſecond time into office, he reſumed this uſeful deſign. He began by ſimplifying the public accompts according to a method propoſed by Dr. Price, and probably digeſted by adminiſtration towards the cloſe of 1782*. After this preparatory arrangement, the miniſter ſet to work upon the grand ſcheme of redemption; and on the 8th of Jan. 1786, he tranſmitted to Dr. Price a propoſal for converting 107$\frac{1}{3}$ millions of the *three per cents* into about 74$\frac{1}{2}$ millions of *five per cents*. "The general idea, ſays he, of "converting the *three per cents* into a ſtock "bearing a higher rate of intereſt, you have on "many occaſions ſuggeſted, and *particularly in* "*the papers* you were ſo good to ſend me laſt "year‡." The project was totally condemned by Dr. Price; and according to Mr. Morgan, the principle was ſo groſſly miſapplied to the circumſtances of the times, that had it been carried into practice, the public would have paid for every hundred in the *three per cents* twenty pounds above the market price. After ſome correſpondence and perſonal communication, Mr. Pitt thought proper to diſcard his own plan, and he prevailed upon Dr. Price to

* Mr. Morgan's review (Cadell) p. 18.—"I have "ordered the ſeveral eſtimates, *made up as correctly as* "*the preſent practice admits*, to be laid before you. I hope "*ſuch further corrections as may be neceſſary*, will be made "before the next year." King's ſpeech, December, 1782.

‡ Mr. Pitt's letter. Review, p. 19.

furniſh three others, of which he adopted, after enfeebling, the weakeſt. In conſequence, the debt incurred from 1785 to 1791, exceeded the debt diſcharged by above a million and a half†. At this time, it was affirmed indeed, in a treaſury pamphlet, that ſix millions were redeemed. But in this ſtatement, the whole ſum paid was reckoned as ſaved, and all that was borrowed and owing, as ſomething different from a debt. In 1791 and 1792, the expenditure ſtill exceeded the income by about half a million ſterling, each year. The revenue ſupplied, therefore, no ſurplus for the redemption of debt, before the commencement of the war; and then, "the long-wiſhed for "proſpect of being relieved from an endleſs "accumulation of taxes, under which the "public is ready to ſink"*, was cloſed, I fear, for ages; and the pious hopes ‡ expreſſed by the miniſter and entertained by the people, received their final diſappointment.

This

† See Mr. Morgan deducing this from the ſtatement of the ſelect committee itſelf of 1791, p. 57.

* Mr. Pitt's ſpeech, 29th March, 1786.

‡ "I am very far from aſcribing any merit to myſelf *in ſuggeſting this ſcheme.* But I cannot but think myſelf very happy ..... that inſtead of expending the money of the public, I ſhould have the great good fortune to be led to ſet about to diminiſh our burdens. This plan.... has long been the wiſh and the hope of all men: and I am uncommonly happy to flatter myſelf that my name may be inſcribed on that firm column now about to be raiſed to national faith and national proſperity."

Mr. PITT.

This conciſe account of a tranſaction which has been generally conſidered as the glory of Mr. Pitt's adminiſtration, may be ſtill abridged into the following queſtions and anſwers.—*What was effected by this ſinking or conſolidated fund?* Little good. *To whom was that little owing?* To Dr. Price, whoſe minuteſt directions concerning the very checks and proviſions were followed. *Why was not more effected?* Becauſe miniſterial convenience was preferred to the public ſervice. The miniſter durſt not riſque a little unpopularity by impoſing immediate taxes for the execution of the moſt efficient ſcheme. *Of what nature were his determining motives?* Altogether narrow and ſelfiſh.

It is by no means neceſſary, according to Machiavel, *that a perſon in power ſhould have integrity, but it is very neceſſary he ſhould have the appearance of it.* The preſent operation authorizes the extenſion of Machiavel's aphoriſm to knowledge, and the talent of applying it.

In conſidering how far the genius of the miniſter himſelf, has been really effective, we ought never to forget the probability that ſuggeſtions have been furniſhed by ſubordinate agents. Where we obſerve a tendency towards that ſpecies of diſhoneſty called plagiariſm, this ſuſpicion becomes the ſtronger. For a ſcrupulous regard to the claims of others generally accompanies the conſciouſneſs of original powers.

Finance, I often heard when a boy, *finance* is *Lord North's forte*. Admiration of Lord North's talents in this department has, I ſuppoſe, periſhed with the ignorance that permitted it to exiſt. Admiration of another financier has ſucceeded. I preſume to foretel that this ſentiment will not be more laſting. I add, that under any mortal, with an ordinary allotment of common ſenſe and application, the revenue *muſt* have attained an equally *flouriſhing* ſtate. Difficult as it may be to bring demonſtration home to political queſtions, a few words will furniſh ſufficient evidence of this neceſſity. Œconomy had become a popular cry in 1763. It is repeated in that King's ſpeech on which Mr. Wilkes commented in the North Briton, No. 45. In 1783 the cry was ſtill louder, for the public mind was aghaſt at the enormity, and galled by the miſapplication, of the ſum employed to hire labourers to manure the ſoil of America with human fleſh and blood. It became indiſpenſable to quiet national anxiety by the improvement of national credit. The miniſter under whoſe adminiſtration the revenue ſhould not appear to be in a fair way of overtaking the expenditure, could by no arts keep his ſituation.—Peace came with manufactures in one hand and traffic in the other; and the people, as their purſes filled, opened them to Mr. Pitt, deſiring him (according to his own acknowledgment) to take what he wanted*.

Will

* Parliamentary Regiſter, xxxi. 214. "In 1786, "Parliament did as much as was in their power, and the "people cheerfully contributed to give efficacy to their "exertions." Mr. Pitt.

Will it be ſuppoſed that Mr. Pitt alone could profit by this willingneſs, and alone feel the urgency of the caſe? Repeated declarations from every individual, whom you can imagine it in the power of fortune to ſtation in the ſame poſt, and ſteps actually taken, prove the contrary. Were all our other ſtateſmen ſo inattentive to parliamentary proceedings, as not to be appriſed of the appointment of a committee of accounts, and of a ſmuggling committee? Were they incapable of reading reports lying on the very table? Did not theſe reports furniſh the idea of two principal operations in finance—of the commutation act, and the act for conſolidating the cuſtoms? and what did this laſt, uſeful as it was, require beyond the powers of a village teacher of arithmetic? Were Mr. Pitt's rivals ſo ignorant of our own political literature as not to be able to avail themſelves of the publications in higheſt repute? Or do they want the wit do deviſe an abſurd plan for extinguiſhing the funded debt: or the ſagacity to pitch upon the worſt of three preſented by Dr. Price, and the addreſs to deprive even that of moſt of its efficiency? Is there any thing in the rigid collection of taxes ſo remote from vulgar apprehenſion? Did it require the depth of Colbert to reſtrict the privilege of franking? Let reference be had to the debates in parliament and to the current ideas of the time; then let that grand financial provement be pointed out, which would have not taken place, or been compenſated by one of equal

equal force, though Mr. Pitt's influence had never operated upon the ſyſtem of taxation. Documents, eaſy of acceſs, furniſh proof that in none of this miniſter's deviations from pre-exiſting projects, is there one idea, difficult to a mind poſſeſſing the ſlighteſt ſpark of the ſpirit of analogy.

The unfriendly diſpoſition of many a late tax bill to the trial by Jury would have rouſed the jealouſy of that generation of Engliſhmen, that could not brook a ſtanding army. In the debate on a motion for enquiring "into all "abuſes committed by perſons in office," during the Weſtminſter election in 1788, "as "far as the ſame relate to penalties incurred "under the exciſe laws or lottery act," it was aſſerted that theſe laws could not have been more cunningly framed had it been intended to put another powerful lever into the hand of corruption. "We have before us," obſerved Mr. Wyndham, "two pregnant in-"ſtances* of the uſe that is made of theſe "ſummary and ſhameful proceedings, which "are introduced into practice for the ſake of "our darling revenue——that revenue for "which every thing is to be ſacrificed; the "citizen to be oppreſſed and ruined; the "conſtitution to be violated. We ſee that "theſe ſummary modes of conviction may "be dexterouſly perverted into inſtruments "of favour or fear, as it may be the corrupt "motive of office for the moment, to gratify

"or

* See the trial of George Roſe, Secretary to the Treaſury.

" or intimidate. You ſee the fact in glaring
" truth before you. It remains for you to
" ſhew to your conſtituents, ſuffering under
" theſe abominable laws, whether you will
" not at leaſt provide againſt the profligate
" perverſion of them to other purpoſes beſides
" revenue †."

Thus there appears in the management of the public fortune nothing deciſive in favour of the miniſter's head. I am happy, however, to be able to point out one event which demonſtrates the purity of heart, for which he was ſo generally admired at his out-ſet, not to have been a chimerical quality.

Town and village, I am aware, ſwarm with perſons who are ill at eaſe, except when they are ſnipping away a neighbour's good name, as if their tongue were given them for ſciſſars. Perſons of this diſpoſition will ſay, *truly, the evil was ſo glaring, and had been ſo often expoſed, that not to attempt ſomething was impoſſible. What young man could enjoy ſound ſleep till he had tried his utmost to root it out? Not to have been in earnest in ſuch a cauſe, would have ſhewn that he came into the world with the heart of a negro-driver, as Richard III. did with a complete ſet of teeth.*

I ſhall leave the reader to pay what attention he pleaſes to this carping language. The fact

† Parliamentary Regiſter, xxxii. 85.

fact is, that, before Mr. Pitt, the ſtate might in one reſpect be compared to the mythological parent who devoured his own offſpring—Revenue depended on wretchedneſs. It has been computed that among the ſix millions and quarter of labouring poor in our iſland, above nineteen millions ſterling are annually ſpent in ale, beer, and ſpirituous liquors; of theſe nineteen above five millions went to the national ſtrong box. The diſtilleries alone—"thoſe manufactories of diſeaſe which take "their bread from the people and convert "it into poiſon"—paid into the exchequer not much leſs than a million yearly. Now as the profligacy of the labourer reſolves itſelf, in the very firſt ſtep of analyſis, into the miſerable exiſtence and premature death of his wife and children, theſe ſums muſt be regarded as ſymbols of an extent of ſuffering, not leſs beyond human conception than the beatitude of the celeſtial regions. To oppoſe the devaſtation of that vice which filled the coffers of the treaſury, what was attempted by former miniſters? They ſent a ſtring of abortive queſtions about the kingdom*. They iſſued, perhaps, an occaſional proclamation for keeping holy the Sabbath. I queſtion if they ever went ſo far as to procure a mandate for an annual ſermon againſt drunkenneſs in every pariſh church throughout Great Britain. We all know how much Mr. Pitt in this department of ſuperintending care has exceeded the moſt

* See the queſtioning act of 1776.

moſt ſanguine expectations of mankind. We have ſeen the means by which this divine young man has brought to ſhame the puny attempts or inhuman negligence of his predeceſſors. All Europe has applauded the judicious ſteps he has taken to enſure ſober conduct among our poor. Generouſly diſdaining the wicked maxim, that *private vices are public benefits*, and aware that men are to be allured into morality, not driven by clumſy compulſive laws, with what deep inſight into the human mind did the Right Honorable Gentleman apply his remedies to the great national malady of drunkenneſs? His own example has no doubt been moſt highly inſtrumental to the happy change we have experienced; and as the labourer now expends in accommodations, which his whole family can partake, the ſums he uſed to employ, in purchaſing miſery for them, and diſeaſe for himſelf, it is found that the revenue has by no means ſuffered that defalcation which ſhallow politicians apprehended. Thus has the crown of ſatisfaction been added to the miniſter's virtuous efforts. By a ſingle domeſtic enterprize he has eclipſed all his father's military renown; and he is accordingly hailed by the conſenting voice of civilized nations as

L'AMI DES HOMMES.

There are, it is true, wretches, who withhold from Mr. Pitt the praiſe of this great purification of public morals, and who even go ſo far as to pretend that it has not taken place

in the ſlighteſt degree. To put the unwary reader on his guard, and at the ſame time to bring detraction to ſhame, I ſhall quote a paſſage from a writer of this diſingenuous tribe. He is not only a juſtice of the peace for Eſſex and Suffolk, but profeſſes himſelf ſo great an admirer of Mr. Pitt as to talk of dedicating a book to him. Nevertheleſs the man lent his name to ſuch language as this: "Neither "puniſhments will intimidate from wrong; "nor will rewards allure to right, while "ſeduction, in the ſemblance of articles of "exciſe, ſtrides with an unbounded ſtep "through this devoted country; while the "financier and the moraliſt, the pulpit and "the treaſury, are at variance; and the defal-"cation of revenue, by a decrement of drunk-"enneſs, is more dreaded than bad morals "and a diſſolute people. If ale-houſes muſt "preſerve their ubiquity; if the village muſt, "by means of theſe hot-beds of ſeduction, "partake of the vices of a populous town— "the populous town of an overgrown metro-"polis—becauſe the treaſury coffers want re-"pleniſhing, in vain are all our endeavours to "preſerve morality. She will diſappear from "among us; and debauchery with his compa-"nions will take her place. It has been the "caſe. *It is ſo now*, and the effects are viſi-"ble throughout the land *."

Whence does this abominable miſrepreſentation of yours proceed, Mr. Juſtice? From effrontery

* Ruggles's Hiſtory of the Poor, 1794. ii. 340.

effrontery or ignorance? You have been poaching, I dare ſwear, among authors who publiſhed years ago. Your worſhip, I perceive, having found in Henry Fielding the following text, imagined the preſent a fit ſeaſon for a homily upon it: "The *ſufferings* "of the poor are indeed leſs known than their "*miſdeeds*. They freeze and rot among "themſelves—they beg and ſteal, and rob "among their betters." But, good Sir, your conceit is too ſhallow; obſolete deſcriptions do not apply to our fortunate times. You forget, I tell you, that we live under William Pitt the reformer! the immaculate! the friend of the friendleſs! Go to, Squire Ruggles, were you never flogged at ſchool for cabbaging?

At the cloſe of theſe reflections, I too might purloin a chapter from political œconomy, and prove, to the credit of my own wiſdom, that the *proſperous* condition of a community depends on the intelligence of the farmer; the inventive genius of the mechanic; the enterprizing ſpirit of the merchant; on the increaſe of capital, and the multiplication of thoſe means, by which labour and time are annihilated. I might go on to ſhew, that other circumſtances being equal, theſe advantages are always exactly in proportion to the liberty enjoyed by any people. But the demonſtration has ſo often been repeated, that he who can ſtill believe that national *proſperity* lives, and moves, and has its being in

the pericranium of a miniſter, muſt be left to the conſequences of his imbecility. And fortunate may a people, rendered helpleſs by credulity, eſteem themſelves, if they eſcape the uſual fate of helpleſſneſs—if they be not deſpiſed—inſulted—plundered.—

The miniſter's public life admits of a diviſion into five periods. 1. The probationary period. 2. The period, during which he filled a ſubordinate, though a high ſtation, in the cabinet. 3. The pacific period of his adminiſtration. 4. The period of military preparation. 5. the period of military action. In reſerving the two latter of theſe periods for a future eſſay, I ſhall not be charged with injuſtice towards Mr. Pitt. His moſt ſpecious claims to the gratitude of his countrymen were doubtleſs eſtabliſhed, while he was content to follow the quiet domeſtic ſyſtem. His dereliction of this ſyſtem, without the formality of a notice, could not ſurprize the obſervers of his paſt inſtability. His ſecond bears an exact analogy to his firſt change. And on this latter occaſion, the temptation, if not more powerful, was more obvious. The eaſy ſucceſs of the duke of Brunſwick in Holland, and the political death of France, were ſufficient to ſeduce a much more ſteady-minded man to ſet up for regulator general of Europe.

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I did not find it neceſſary to dwell upon his conduct, while he ſtood ſecond in power. But there is a remark, which I muſt not ſuffer to eſcape the reader. He muſt be conſidered as having then bound himſelf anew to follow up the principles he had all along profeſſed. He ſigned and ſealed the inſtrument which recited the conditions, on which he had invited the public to accept of his ſervices, and he ſolemnly recognized as his rule and guide, the ſummary of univerſal reform, compriſed in the king's ſpeech of December, 1782.

He ſtood, therefore, perſonally pledged 1. for a reform of parliament. 2. for acting upon a ſyſtem oppoſite to that, for which the conductors of the American war had been arraigned by their parliamentary adverſaries, and after a long hearing, found guilty by the public. Not only were all arts of corruption to be forborne, but every department of the ſtate was to be purged of the pernicious brood, commonly known by a title, the reverſe of *the people's enemies*. 3. The military eſtabliſhment, in both branches, was to be kept as low as poſſible. 4. An abolition of ſinecures, reverſions, and pluralities was to be ſincerely carried into effect. 5. A thorough inveſtigation of cuſtom-houſe places was to be accompliſhed. When Mr. Pitt, to uſe his favourite deſignation, was *miniſter of the country*, in declaring againſt the disfranchiſement of workmen in the dock-yards, he confeſſed that "the influence of the crown ought to be

"compleatly

" compleatly overturned and deſtroyed in " matters of election." (*Debate of March* 30, 1786). 6. The enormous nuiſance of fees, " which encroached on the civil laſt, prevented our navy from being manned, and which " in the department of the king's foreſts, " threatened not to leave ſufficient timber, " within leſs than a century hence, to ſupply " our navy" (P. Reg. xx. 50.), was to be removed. 7. The civil liſt bill was to be carried into ſtrict execution, and no exceedings permitted. 8. The crown lands were to be ſold; and 9. the foreſts to be planted. 10. Above all, a general pacific ſyſtem, was to be maintained, in concurrence with an active and ſcrutinizing œconomy. In reality, after our experience of the expenſive inutility of continental connexions, and of thoſe extravagant jobs, by which a late adminiſtration converted the earnings of the induſtrious to the uſe of the unprincipled, had we beheld with indifference the ſame follies, and the ſame villanies acted over again, we ſhould have deſerved, that inſtruction ſhould be thenceforth addreſſed to our feelings, and not to our reaſon. For what end ſhould a Britiſh miniſter plot the demolition of Ruſſia, by ſtirring up the Turks againſt this devoted country in one quarter, and the Swedes in another? For what plauſible purpoſe foment diſturbances in the Auſtrian Netherlands, leſt the Emperor ſhould not be ſufficiently occupied by his Turkiſh war? Why, for the ſake of a a few ſea-otter ſkins, offer Spain an affront,

which

which that haughty power was ſure to lay up for future retribution, if at the moment ſhe could no otherwiſe avenge it than by denying freer acceſs to our cargoes, and overwhelming our imported wares under a load of vexatious taxes? Why thruſt Portugal into a cloſer league with Spain? Why caſt out his waſh-pot over Denmark, and make Holland, his footſtool? why ſcour the continent with his couriers, and fill every reſidence with his negociators? why create in mankind ſuch a diſpoſition that, whatever momentary oſcillations of temper other enmities happened to excite, court and people ſhould reſt in an averſion to the Britiſh name? Was acting the BUSY-BODY of the political drama, the way to recruit or ſatisfy one among the exhauſted and craving multitudes that cover our fields and crowd our manufactories?

Whether Mr. Pitt have purſued the great objects of public utility with that honeſt fervour, which he muſt have felt on challenging his ſuperior to ſacrifice ambition's higheſt prize to their attaintment, we can decide with abſolute certainty in ſome caſes, though not perhaps in all. We have the reports of the commiſſioners of accounts and of the commiſſioners for examining the ſtate of the public offices—all of miniſterial appointment and conſequently on their guard againſt exaggerated and inflammatory ſtatements. On comparing what theſe commiſſioners point out as eſſential to be done, with the reforms actually

adopted

adopted, the novice in politics will be aſtoniſhed at the diſproportion.

As to the cuſtoms, a bill for aboliſhing the patent offices in them was propoſed and dropped! The red book will teſtify how ſtrenuouſly the affair of Col. Barre's penſion has been followed up, by ridding the revenue of thoſe places, which coſt no care but to get and keep. Mr. Tooke*, who by promiſing to tranſmit to Mr. Joyce, an account of the public money annually pocketed by Mr. Pitt and his relations, innocently occaſioned his correſpondent to be impriſoned for a plot againſt the ſtate, deſerves to be conſulted on this head.—The perpetual exceedings of the civil liſt are well known: they never fail to make a ſtronger impreſſion than money matters of much greater conſequence. But it may not be generally underſtood, how far the methods for freeing this liſt from its incumbrances, as laid down in the fourteenth report of the commiſſioners of accompts, have been followed. Nor may it be remembered, that Lord Lanſdown publicly declared—not indeed without contradiction, but with juſt ſo much contradiction as confirmed his declaration—that the income of the civil liſt in 1782, afforded to the liberality of the ſovereign a ſurplus of 8000l. During the ſix months he was in office, this miniſter by ſtriking off various uſeleſs places, eſtabliſhed an annual ſaving of 116,000l. a year

* See his account of Mr. Joyce's plot in his trial.

year, and was proceeding to ſtill greater reductions †. On the 8th of April, 1794, Mr. Roſe, ſecretary to the treaſury, clerk of parliament, maſter of the pleas, ſurveyor of the green wax, and holder of I know not how many public truſts beſides, undertook once for all to remove the odium which ſtill attaches to tellerſhips, and rangerſhips, and wardenſhips. 'Under the notion of an œconomical reform in 1782, and a ſubſequent enquiry by the treaſury, 278 places, he ſaid, had been aboliſhed, and the expences reduced from 171,000l. to 60,000l. The ſalaries of the exchequer office had been reduced from 45,000l. to 17,800l. thoſe of the auditors of the impreſs from 44,000l. to 7000l. The penſion liſt had been reduced above 48,000l. ſince 1783, and ſinecures in the cuſtoms to the amount of 10,680l. had been ſuppreſſed, and in the exciſe of 12,000l.' Theſe ſums, when the 116,00l. of 1782 are deducted, make of annual ſavings accompliſhed in twelve years 129,680l. againſt which the intereſt of the money, voted in aid of the civil liſt, is to be placed as unneceſſary waſte, according to the doctrine and engagements of the miniſtry in 1782. It muſt be confeſſed, that according to the demonſtration of his friend, for one who had once taken œconomy on his ſhoulders, it would have been difficult to ſet it down more gently. Mr. Roſe has not always ſtood ſo far aloof from the profane vulgar, as not to

† P. Reg. xx. 49.

be apprized of a diſtinction, which they clearly apprehend and expreſs with pithy quaintneſs. *The good heart and true, goes his job fairly through; but mattock and ſhovel falſe flinchers forego, when they have nibbled a bit, juſt for ſay-ſo and ſhow.*

There are other queſtions on this ſubject, which the ſecretary of the treaſury could anſwer in behalf of his chief. Do the ſpecified deductions make ſo much againſt ſecret influence, as the appointment of a firſt commiſſioners of cuſtoms and of exciſe (with enlarged ſalaries) make for it? Suppoſing the firſt Lord of the treaſury determined to exert all the force of his office, would he not find in theſe appointments a handle to wield both departments at will? and was not this convenience wanting when diviſion rendered the power of theſe departments unmanageable? Placing influence againſt œconomy, let Mr. Roſe then ſtrike the balance in favour of the popular intereſt. This ſame gentleman, ſince it is unknown to every body elſe, might inform us, what part of thoſe mighty projects of planting in the foreſts has been executed. He can likewiſe ſay, whether the frequent converſations in parliament on the ſale of the crown lands, have produced any thing better than an act for letting them anew; and whether even this weak ſubſtitute meaſure was adopted earlier than 1794.

To the point of corruption, it will be ſufficient to call a ſingle witneſs, who delivered his ſentiments on Mr. Pitt's adherence to his virtuous reſolutions, ſo early as April 18, 1785.

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" A *late* adminiſtration—it may perhaps be " ſaid—was an adminiſtration of corruption " ---- but a good opinion muſt unqueſtion- " ably be entertained of the *preſent*, which is " known not to entertain *any one*, who has " been an agent of corruption:" So ſpake Mr. Powys, and the whole ſenate burſt into a loud laugh, before he had well finiſhed the ſentence.

Parliamentary reform, which if it were perſonified might be made to ſay to every other ſpecies of reform

——*moves, ſed nihil promoves,*

ſupplies a caſe of conſcience too nice for me to decide. Mr. Day, to whom application was made as to a confeſſor*, decided upon the appearances, that Mr. Pitt had acquitted himſelf of his promiſe. Others queſtion his ſincerity even here. They pretend, that in 1782, the conſent of the court itſelf had been obtained to a fixed plan, but Mr. Pitt to ſave his honour brought forward a propoſal, when the ſubject was cold, to which nobody was pledged, and which of courſe was rejected; thus dexterouſly ſecuring to himſelf a houſe of commons of the ſame compoſition as thoſe which had ſanctioned the ſchemes of Lord North. But to impute original and inherent depravity, is very ſhallow philoſophy. Among thoſe whom the furies of ambition have hurried, through carnage and deſolation, with

* The letter is given in Mr. Keir's life of Mr. Day: it was probably written by Mr. Roſe.

the moſt headlong violence, I am not able to name one who ſet forward with evil purpoſes. I cannot, therefore ſcruple to believe that Mr. Pitt was in earneſt at firſt. And in the flouriſh, with which he opened his ſpeech in favour of reform in 1785, I rather perceive want of meaning or of judgment, than of ſincerity. His declaration that "he roſe with "hopes infinitely more ſanguine than he had "ventured to entertain at any preceding "period," may be fairly taken as a kind of complimentary form. Or, if without putting his miniſterial exiſtence upon the iſſue, he really promiſed himſelf ſucceſs, this will be but a trifling addition to a long catalogue of ſimilar errors. For, with whatever dexterity he may have manœuvred to preſerve his ſtation, the event has uniformly diſgraced his predictions of contingencies beneficial to the people.

In ſupport of theſe, and ſuch other proviſions, as a few years ago were deemed neceſſary to lighten the general burden, or to place it beyond the power of a future miniſtry to plunge the people into a ſecond American war, Mr. Pitt offered his ſervices without reſerve. He cauſed it to be underſtood, that none of the propoſed ameliorations went far enough to ſatisfy him in behalf of the public; and that if it depended ſolely on himſelf, preſent relief ſhould have been much more largely adminiſtered, and future injury much more ſcrupulouſly provided againſt.

By

By the inſtitution of the ſinking fund the public was taught to expect that its ſhattered fortunes would be gradually repaired. This expectation ſoon ripened into a general perſuaſion, that they were in the moſt thriving condition. The truſtee did not fail from time to time to proclaim the care, fidelity, and ſucceſs with which his duties were diſcharged. By a very ſimple recital, the reader will be enabled to decide whether the honeſty or prudence of his conduct authorized his annual boaſts. In direct oppoſition to the principle he himſelf recognizes in his letter to Dr. Price, purchaſes were made, except only once, in the ſtock of loweſt intereſt. By this management a greater number of nominal millions were extinguiſhed; but then, a ſum little ſhort of four millions, ſuppoſing a term of 26 years to be taken into the computation, was ſacrificed to appearances; for ſo much greater would have been the amount of the redeemed debt, if purchaſes had been made in ſtock of higher intereſt. The ſum however would not have ſounded ſo large in ears, to which a million, whether it be in the *three per cents* or the *four per cents*, is a million ſtill. Beſides this regular deviation from principle, the miniſter—he who is lynx-eyed to whatever threatens to ſhake or promiſes to confirm his power—he who reſted his preſent conſequence, and his hope of a good name hereafter, upon his capacity for this branch of public œconomy—cloſed his eyes or refuſed his hand to a chance of extinguiſhing the public debt,

debt, ſuch as time had never offered before, and will probably never again offer. Circumſtances were combined in the following very extraordinary manner. The *three per cents* had riſen to 96: and while they thus ſtood within 6 of par or of 100, the *four per cents* were no higher than 102. In this ſituation of the ſtocks, had there been given for each 100l. in the *four per cents*, 100l. in the *three per cents*, together with an annuity of one pound for ſeven years, which is worth 6l. the difference then exiſting, not leſs than 327,500l. a year would have accrued to the revenue, at the expiration of thoſe ſeven years. Such an annuity at 4 per cent is worth 6,222,500l. Though the condition, contrary to all probability, had been refuſed, great advantage might have been derived from the payment of the *four per cents* at par by a loan.—The miniſter therefore neglected to ſave for the public in this ſingle inſtance above ſix millions. This being added to the deficiency of free revenue after 26 years, ariſing from purchaſes in the *three* inſtead of the *four per cents*, the whole loſs comes to exceed ten millions ſterling†. The author of theſe ſurpriſing diſcoveries doubts whether "it would "not have been better, if the ſinking fund "had never been eſtabliſhed." But this ſentiment, which beſpeaks charity of a temper to embrace the abject, and ſympathize with the miſerable, will be infallibly reprobated by thoſe who have refined their feelings into

† Facts by W. Morgan. (Cadell.) 1796.

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harmony with the fortunate and the exalted. It will be to them a matter of joyful conſideration that even in this inſtance the miniſter has not put a vain truſt in Chance; and that the ſinking fund, however ineffectual in diſcharging the national debt, has ſerved to reconcile the minds of men to new expenditure.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VII.

Omiſſions.

" He has left undone thoſe things which he ought " to have done."

COMMON PRAYER.

IN *almoſt every country*, ſays a ſhrewd obſerver, *the people have been ſqueezed in a political preſs, to which the combined powers, eccleſiaſtical and civil, have contributed each its ſcrew.* Much as this machine had been already ſtrained, we have ſeen the miniſter obliged, in conſequence of our coſtly expeditions againſt America, to force it tighter ſtill. The new taxes were accompanied with vexatious proviſions; ſome were prejudicial to morals and others dangerous to liberty. Theſe inconveniences were viſible in the encouragement which the duty on hats and gloves promiſed to informers; and in the extenſion of the exciſe in the wine-trade, and in the manufactories of tobacco and cotton. The more rigorous exaction of old taxes not only wore the appearance of fiſcal rapacity, but was equivalent to new impoſitions. The chearfulneſs, with which theſe evils were borne,

borne, challenged ſome return; and a ſtateſman, who, in the language of the Poliſh patriot, "had borne the people in his boſom," would have exerted himſelf to find a compenſation of more ſolidity than empty acknowledgment.

1. Among the nuiſances, by which daily life is infeſted, there are not a few, which, as they aroſe from legiſlative folly, legiſlative wiſdom has been long called upon to remove. What prevented Mr. Pitt from employing thoſe very miniſterial means of operating upon the public mind, which he accuſed a noble predeceſſor of ſo cruelly abuſing, for preparing ſome amendment in our criminal juriſdiction? Humanity has long remonſtrated againſt certain parts of that code, which we inherited from barbarians, and which we have been impelled by that commercial ſpirit, to which life appears vile in compariſon with property, to render ſtill more ſanguinary. I doubt whether there exiſts an individual, however removed from temptation to commit any of the common capital crimes, and ever ſo much diſpoſed to confound juſtice with law, whoſe mind has not been occaſionally wounded by the frequent and ſweeping executions, which our public papers are continually announcing. And where was the difficulty of inſtituting a commiſſion to inveſtigate how far enormities had been prevented by aſſigning the ſame puniſhment to him who cuts a hop-bine as to him who cuts a man's throat? We cannot be ſurprized to

find the free ſtates of America proceeding by gradual advances in the mitigation of their penal laws. It is however remarkable that the iron heart of deſpotiſm itſelf ſhould have taken a lively intereſt in this work of mercy. But neither pity nor policy have produced any relaxation in the ſeverity of puniſhments inflicted in Great Britain. On the contrary, our legiſlators have been continually providing new laws for getting rid of the wretches, ſtyled by Shakeſpeare *the cankers of a quiet world and a long peace.* In 1787, (April 27), a commiſſion of retroſpective enquiry concerning the real effect, produced by our innumerable executions, was propoſed in the houſe of commons. Mr. Pitt, contrary to his uſual policy, diſcountenanced the meaſure in direct terms. If this buſineſs ſhould be agitated a ſecond time, he will not forget how much a repetition of the ſentiments, publiſhed by innumerable writers from Sir Thomas More to Beccaria and Voltaire, will contribute to ſupport the reputation he has acquired by his various humane effuſions. An oration, more to his purpoſe, would equally have laid the propoſal to reſt. I am, nevertheleſs, obliged to confeſs that the ſhort ſpeech he did make was not unworthy of Octavius Cæſar himſelf: and in ſaying this, I truſt I ſhall not be thought to ſpeak with diſparagement of our illuſtrious miniſter.

2. In the trial by jury we poſſeſs the beſt ſecurity that it is perhaps poſſible for the wit of man to deviſe againſt judicial oppreſſion. But

But wherever juſtice is on all ſides ſurrounded by expenſive forms, it amounts to an actual eſtabliſhment of premiums for knavery. Under favour of this ſingle circumſtance, brazen perjury, ſlender cunning, and the moſt conſummate talents for fraudulent plots will, each, find conſtant employ and certain profits. Many wrongs will be committed, under which prudence will find it better to acquieſce with patience, than to ſeek redreſs. Nothing in life is more common than falſe claims for ſervices, advanced with a view to extort money, under terror of a law-ſuit. The firmeſt aſſurance that they cannot be ſubſtantiated is of no avail. For when they do not exceed certain bounds, which the ſwindler will well know how to fix, it is generally found adviſeable, in point of œconomy, to enter into a compoſition with him.—Again, let us ſuppoſe a running account to exiſt between two individuals, of whom the one is either credulous to a degree of weakneſs, or diſpoſed to confidence by conſciouſneſs of his own integrity, while the other ſhall be vigilant to make any profits which the law will allow. The latter, like the common run of knaves, will be ſpecious in his demeanour, and moſt ſcrupulouſly honourable in his proteſtations. He takes care to keep always from twenty to an hundred pounds on the debtor ſide. After ſome time, the creditor mildly ſuggeſts the propriety of a final ſettlement. This ſuggeſtion the other party will embrace with great warmth. He will probably alſo regret that it has not been carried

into effect before, and infallibly cenſure himſelf for that ſort of remiſſneſs, which is the ſupererogation of ſtrict honeſty. But he will take care to advance no ſtep further. At length his excuſes will fail, and he will drop his diſguiſe ſo far as to inſinuate that he himſelf has been the loſer by the delay. It would be madneſs in the real ſufferer to vindicate his right by inſtituting an action, as the verdict would coſt more than it would bring.

Theſe will ſeem trifling hardſhips to thoſe who are apprized of the exiſtence of agents of the law, that act upon a well-combined ſyſtem of depredation *(see Grant's progreſs of a modern attorney)*. The operations of theſe men are carried on principally againſt that friendleſs claſs, which, having juſt overcome the firſt difficulties of entrance into the world, is beginning to thrive in hope, and has juſt derived an encouraging confidence from the experienced effects of their induſtry. This is the claſs, that moſt of all perhaps requires, and beſt deſerves protection. Nor is it an individual, but commonly a whole family that ſinks. And the houſewife, who had flattered herſelf that ſhe had eſcaped the ordinary calamity of a debauched huſband, now ſees herſelf condemned to famiſh, with her little ones beſide her, in the inextricable meſhes of the law. This ſpecies of miſery puts on an endleſs variety of forms. But if a perſon be acquainted with a few examples only, it will be difficult for him to forbear en-

enquiring, how long ſuch havoc of domeſtic comfort is to continue the reproach of legiſlation? And, whether a ſet of beings, compared with whom the tygers, that infeſt the wilds of Aſia, are harmleſs, ſhall be for ever permitted to prey upon helpleſs ſimplicity, in the centre of civilized ſociety?

We have writers who never fail to give the reins to their eloquence, as ſoon as they get on the ſmooth and even ground of our civil juriſprudence. *In the courts of England*, they affirm, *and in thoſe courts only, does juſtice preſide with blind impartiality. Favour and wealth deſpair of obtaining a verdict againſt evidence.* This is true. Penury has never operated with an Engliſh jury to the privation of right, nor would it have this operation in the Chancery of Heaven. To carry the cauſe fairly thither conſtitutes the grand difficulty; and I wiſh the ſtateſman, who generally comes in with the law and the conſtitution for an equal ſhare of praiſe, had condeſcended to lend an helping hand towards its removal.

3. I am deeply ſenſible how much a miniſter has to deſire the co-operation of the clerical corps, and to dread its counteraction; eſpecially if he harbour any ſecret hope of gathering laurels from war. Nevertheleſs, I aſſert that the abolition of tythe, is a meaſure, on which a ſincere friend to his country would *riſque his place*. But the riſque may not be ſo great, as this is perhaps the only caſe in which the anger of the clergy might be ſafely braved.

into effect before, and infallibly cenſure himſelf for that ſort of remiſſneſs, which is the ſupererogation of ſtrict honeſty. But he will take care to advance no ſtep further. At length his excuſes will fail, and he will drop his diſguiſe ſo far as to inſinuate that he himſelf has been the loſer by the delay. It would be madneſs in the real ſufferer to vindicate his right by inſtituting an action, as the verdict would coſt more than it would bring.

Theſe will ſeem trifling hardſhips to thoſe who are apprized of the exiſtence of agents of the law, that act upon a well-combined ſyſtem of depredation *(see Grant's progreſs of a modern attorney)*. The operations of theſe men are carried on principally againſt that friendleſs claſs, which, having juſt overcome the firſt difficulties of entrance into the world, is beginning to thrive in hope, and has juſt derived an encouraging confidence from the experienced effects of their induſtry. This is the claſs, that moſt of all perhaps requires, and beſt deſerves protection. Nor is it an individual, but commonly a whole family that ſinks. And the houſewife, who had flattered herſelf that ſhe had eſcaped the ordinary calamity of a debauched huſband, now ſees herſelf condemned to famiſh, with her little ones beſide her, in the inextricable meſhes of the law. This ſpecies of miſery puts on an endleſs variety of forms. But if a perſon be acquainted with a few examples only, it will be difficult for him to forbear en-

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braved. This body, whoſe powerful breath can ſo eaſily impel their hearers to the field of battle, in the teeth of ball, ſword, and bayonet, would harangue to great diſadvantage in favour of tythes. It could ſcarce eſcape the moſt inexperienced ſimplicity that they were pleading the cauſe of private intereſt in oppoſition to the general good. I am aware that my countrymen are tenacious of practices, handed down from their anceſtors; and as I happened to paſs through Birmingham before the riots had ſubſided, I may be allowed to poſſeſs ſome notion of the power which the cry of *danger to the Church* has to ſtir their blood. But the recent example of a people, not only uncommonly retentive of ancient uſages, but the ſlaves of a ſuperſtition, from which we have long emancipated ourſelves, compleatly convinces me that this innovation is practicable. The encouraging circumſtance, to which I allude, is not ſo well known in England, as it deſerves to be——The French, after taking poſſeſſion of the Netherlands a ſecond time, ſeem to have conducted themſelves with far more tenderneſs or policy towards the natives, than at firſt. It was an expreſs injunction of the Convention to their commiſſioners to *reſpect the uſages of the conquered countries*. In conſequence, the deputies on miſſion directed that the tythe of the low countries ſhould be paid to the eccleſiaſtical impropriators. "We "experienced, ſays Lefebure, a lively reſiſt-"ance from the people of the country. They "offered to pay tythe to the republic in pre-

" preference to the clergy. Conformity to " principle required the execution of our " reſolution, which had the ſanction of the " committee of public ſafety. We reſorted " with circumſpection to the aid of military " garriſons. Some individuals among the " clergy taking a harſh advantage of this " meaſure, the fermentation continued to " increaſe.

" We ſuſpended the employment of the armed " force, and applied to the committee of " public ſafety, by whom we were autho- " rized to take the tythe on account of the " republic. The levy now went on with the " utmoſt facility. And the eccleſiaſtics ob- " ſerved with ſorrow and ſurprize, how eaſily " the Belgic people relinquiſhed the habit of " paying them their ancient dues*."

Under the guarantee of this experiment, we may venture to diſmiſs all apprehenſion of a dangerous ferment from the abolition of tythes. The tide of general feeling will not in this inſtance run counter to innovation. The plea of divine right will not make much impreſſion on the country. But the aſſumed impoſſibility of finding an equitable ſubſtitute may be uſed as an argument to deter us from ſeeking one. To this it might be replied, that in Scotland an expedient has been diſcovered for exonerating improvements from this monſtrous impoſition of a tenth of the

* Moniteur of Oct. 6, 1795.

groſs

groſs produce; ſo that to remove the moſt odious and oppreſſive part of the evil requires no operation more painful than tranſporting a cuſtom acroſs the Tweed.—But is this a caſe where we are to be put off with ſo poor an excuſe, as the difficulty of executing what ought to be done? If Mr. Pitt be confeſſed unequal to undertakings at once difficult and uſeful, the controverſy ceaſes by conceſſion of all, for which his adverſaries contend. For they only maintain that country gentlemen, the trading intereſt and the multitude have equally been erred in taking him for a political Hercules; and this, they alledge, is preciſely the miſtake we are doomed to bewail in tears of blood. Candour and common ſenſe undoubtedly require that the examination of his merits ſhould proceed on the ſuppoſition that he ought to be able to cope with difficulties. For by what other poſſible tenure can he pretend to hold public confidence?

It is next to impoſſible to imagine a member of ſociety ſo circumſtanced as not to have an intereſt in the abrogation of ſanguinary ſtatutes, the facilitation of civil juſtice, and the deliverance of the ſoil from the curſe, which has been laid upon it by ſuperſtition. And if ſo, it will not be hard to ſettle the claim theſe objects have upon him, who feels himſelf called upon to act as ſuperintendant of a nation's welfare. But if he be penetrated with a lively ſenſe of general good and evil,

ſucceſs

ſucceſs even in theſe momentous deſigns will not ſatiate his deſire of being uſeful. The knowledge of what yet remains to be done will be too ſharp a ſpur to ſuffer his mind to ſink on the pillow of ſelf-ſatisfaction. He will arrogate little; not becauſe he avoids boaſtfulneſs as characteriſtic of the narrow-minded and unfeeling pretender, but becauſe his performances fall ſo far ſhort of his habitual ideas as to render oſtentation foreign to his nature. The ſimplicity therefore of a Turgot or a Waſhington will mark the whole of his demeanour; if he is obliged to mention in public the iſſue of his own endeavours, his ſpeech will ſavour more of regret than vanity, and without purpoſely preparing his mind for the particular occaſion, his great aim will be to incite his hearers to co-operate with him in his future labours.

To deſcribe what a ſtateſman, whoſe conceptions are elevated to the dignity of his functions, would meditate or attempt, requires a compleat ſurvey of the SMALLER UNIVERSE OF MAN. He would allow himſelf no relaxation till he had ſecured a ſupply to the phyſical wants of the people. To this the torture, which is endured by thoſe who are in want of the prime neceſſaries, would be his chief inducement. He would likewiſe be ſenſible of the impoſſibility of proceeding further, till ſo much is effected: for by a law of human nature, the bodily appetite muſt be appeaſed, before the mental ſhall begin to crave.

As the pureſt and moſt permanent enjoyment of man is derived from the exerciſe of his rational faculties, it muſt be the conſtant care of a philanthropic miniſter to promote the diſſemination of knowledge. Nor would he be content till he ſaw every conſiderable town provided, at leaſt as well as the places, by the courteſy of England called *univerſities*, with the whole furniture of ſcience. The faculties of every ſtate in Europe, if properly uſed, are competent to this proviſion; and, beſides the advantage of innocent amuſement and the liberalizing effect of knowledge, it is the immediate intereſt of every individual, expoſed to their influence, to be acquainted with the properties of the various agents in nature. The preſent ignorance of men in this reſpect is perpetually expoſing them to miſtakes, by which they forfeit life itſelf, or health, the firſt bleſſing of life.

After purſuing theſe principles through all the particulars which they comprehend, let the reader go to Chalmers and Roſe; and liſten with what pleaſure he may to their pompous recitals of augmenting tonnage, and ſcraps ſaved in the treaſury.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VIII.

A Dialogue.

All talkee, talkee.

NEGRO.

ARCHDEACON Supple, *taking off his ſpectacles, and laying his right hand, in which he holds a newſpaper, on his knee.* Prodigious! well, this is amazing I proteſt.

George Supple. Oh, dear Papa, I have not ſeen your eyes twinkle ſo, ſince laſt viſitation feaſt—What *is* the matter? aye, I know now, General Clairfait has trimmed the French again.—How many thouſands has he killed? I vow I hope he gave the dogs no quarter.

Archdeacon. That's my boy. Come hither and give me a kiſs.—See, how the careleſs monkey treats his ſiſter's apron—*takes George between his knees.*—Clairfait will let us hear of him in good time, never fear. At preſent, his brave fellows are taking a little repoſe. But what I am reading is a ſpeech of——

George. Oh a ſpeech—is that all? I would not give a toſs of this here Birmingham halfpenny for a ſpeech——

Archdeacon. Softly, Mr. Impetuous—You are in your Tully—and you ought to underſtand

Cedant arma togæ et concedat——

George. —— —— —— —— laurea linguæ.

Oh yes I know that well enough. We had it not long ago for a theme. But I had rather hear of a battle than a ſpeech for all that. Come, come along, Charles—We ſhall have our ears dinned all evening long about this ſpeech, if we ſtay here—Come.

Archdeacon. Where are you two blades marching—I ſee there's an underſtanding between you—ſome miſchief, I warrant.

George. Only going to have a little fun, Papa.

Archdeacon. Well, take care of yourſelves, boys, be ſure.

George. Oh never fear, Sir. Let Charles and me alone for that—Come, Charles, *(whiſpering)* I have got the caniſter; and we can eaſily tie it to old, fat Flora's tail. How the poor devil *will* ſqueal and ſcour away—and then there'll be ſuch a hurry ſcurry among the reſt of the dogs—The ſtreet will be all in an uproar—Come, get your hat, man——*(they go.)*

Archdeacon. What a ſpirit! Some parents would have been guilty of breaking ſuch a child's heart. You know, Mrs. Supple, I have always declared it as my decided opinion, that that lad was born to ſerve his king; and

a noble fellow he will turn out, whoever lives to ſee the day.

Mrs. Supple. But he has made ſad havoc, I muſt ſay, ſince he has been maſter of his new gun. My poultry are in hourly jeopardy—and it is ſcarce three weeks, ſince he ſhot two geeſe upon Farmer Leafield's pool; and though they were too lean and tough for roaſting, I was obliged to pay—

Archdeacon. Tut, tut, Mrs. Supple: mere wild oats; nothing in nature more, take my word for it. Have not you learned, Madam, that the brighteſt beer always ferments the briſkeſt—*takes up the newſpaper.*

Miſs Supple. But, Papa, I hoped you were going to entertain us with an account of the debate. Pray, what was the ſubject?

Archdeacon. The ſubject, child—that motion of young Whitbread's—an hot-headed ſpark—how people that have a ſtake in the country can take pleaſure to inſtil theſe notions into the multitude at the preſent criſis! The poor, by and by, will fancy their wages in downright earneſt too ſmall for their wants.

Miſs Sophy Supple. Indeed, Papa, it would have made your heart ache, if you had been where we were to-day. Thomas Hoggins is a ſober honeſt man; and his maſter ſaid he got better wages at his threſhing than common men; and his wife is not idle; and his family is not particularly large; and Mar-

Margaret, I do assure you, made it appear plainly, that his earnings are insufficient for their support, though they had no rent to pay, or cloaths to buy. And the illness of the little girl—the weakest of the four—was very likely owing to want of enough to eat; and the others look little better than half famished; and few of her neighbours, according to Margaret's account, are in——

Archdeacon. Heyday, Miss Prate-apace, pity you were not in the house to second Whitbread—But if you had a little more discretion and less flippancy, you would perceive that *individuals must suffer:* and I dare say, though you have forgotten the lesson, you remember the occasion, when I quoted to you an observation, which includes all that can be said—yes, and all that needs be said. The people, says the *divine* Mr. Burke—I am sure he has as good a title to the epithet as Plato—"the people must labour to obtain "what by labour can be obtained, and when "they find, as they commonly do,"—remember that—*as they commonly do*—"the "success disproportioned to the endeavour, "they must be taught their consolation in "the final proportions of eternal justice†." There's piety! there's humanity. If our puny preachers of reform had any modesty, the authority of so seraphic a writer——*(A double rap at the door)*..... Who can this be? My dear—I was not informed, Mrs. Supple, that you expected any visitor this afternoon.

† Reflections, p. 351.—First Edition.

Mrs.

Mrs. Supple. Indeed, I beg pardon.—I proteſt I quite forgot to ſay, that my couſin Tremaine's groom left word he would ſtop to tea on his way from the Juſtices' meeting.

Archdeacon. Ay, your couſin Frank—a very promiſing young man, once I thought—he went with us in the aſſociation againſt levellers—he entered heartily into the war—but ſome ſtrange turn—a charming eſtate he has to be ſure, and excellent connections, elſe I ſhould have little pleaſure in ſeeing him enter my——But here he comes.—*Mr. Tremaine is ſhewn in.*

Archdeacon. My dear and moſt valued friend, it always gives a freſh ſpring to my ſpirits to ſhake you by the hand—Here we have been all expecting your appearance with the moſt pleaſing anxiety——

Mr. Tremaine. I ſhall be ſorry if I have kept the ladies from their tea. I intended to be with you a good half hour ſooner.

Mrs. Supple. The Archdeacon is always happy to ſee you at your own time—preſs of buſineſs, I ſuppoſe——

Mr. Tremaine. Why, no; I cannot lay much to the account of buſineſs. But without having more than uſual upon the whole, we had ſome of a nature that led to a converſation more than commonly eager; and in ſuch circumſtances time, you know——

Arch-

Archdeacon. Politics, I dare wager—politics, couſin Tremaine, in ſpite of the bills.

Mr. Tremaine. We were peſtered with applications for increaſe of pariſh allowance; and ſo after dinner we fell at once to talk of the laſt debate.

Archdeacon. Aye, I warrant; and you were each man of you earneſt to expreſs how much he was charmed with Mr. Pitt's ſpeech. He charmed the houſe and he will charm the country. Come, my worthy friend and couſin, own you have been too haſty in ſome of your late opinions. The miniſter has not, you ſee, deſerted his principles one after another. You hear him now uſing the ſame manly language as when he opened againſt poor Lord North. Obſerve but his argument for aboliſhing the law, which prohibits relief as long as any property remains. He would have even the pauper animated with the ſpirit of Britiſh independence. What a noble idea; and what a noble mind in which it originated! Could one of their Republican zealots have ſaid more? Who will now venture to inſinuate that the orator regards our liberties with an evil eye?—My dear Sir, you were a little diſconcerted ſome time ſince; and I will confeſs my own confidence to have been ſhaken. But things are beginning to wear a different aſpect. We ſhall get all the iſlands at laſt; and the Emperor will recover his provinces; and France with her extremities lopped off, and her trunk feeble from profuſe bleeding, muſt accept juſt what terms it ſhall

pleaſe

pleaſe us to impoſe. To a certainty then we ſet out from the peace with a more abſolute command of the ocean than ever; and our territorial acquiſitions will enſure proſperity to our trade; though after every war, as Mr. Chalmers demonſtrates, trade *muſt* exceed its ancient limits, independently of extraordinary advantages.—See then, how little reaſon Old England has to deſpond. She has actually received benefit from a war in which her glorious ſucceſſes have inſured the duration of civil ſociety and all that—And for the miniſter, he will then have leiſure to purſue his beneficial plans.

Mr. Tremaine. To as much effect as formerly, I firmly believe; though you, Mr. Archdeacon, ſhould not prove to have been in a waking dream for ſeveral ſeconds laſt paſt—But I perfectly approve the ſpeech—

Archdeacon. I moſt cordially rejoice to hear it, and congratulate you on your re-appearance among your old friends.

Mr. Tremaine. Fair and ſoftly, Reverend Sir. This very ſpeech would of itſelf, I fancy, have cooled my admiration of the ſpeaker, if I had not before diſentangled myſelf from the croud of his worſhippers.—But I remember how the laſt political converſation we had together ended. So pray allow me to turn towards the ladies.——You, couſin Sophy, are making rapid advances in botany. I hope ſoon to be able to ſhew you a very ſplendid work, which will contain ſomething more

than names and pictures. I am told it is to make us acquainted with the *manners* of plants. The paſſion-flower——

Archdeacon. Your pardon, couſin Tremaine. You and Sophy ſhall talk of botany by yourſelves ſome fine ſpring morning, ha, ha, ha!—To a little warmth we may plead guilty on the occaſion you mention. But I was low; things ſeemed taking a bad turn; and your change hurt me at that particular moment, as if it had been deſertion of a friend in diſtreſs. But why ſhould that prevent a little friendly chat? My mind was full of the ſubject; even now, as you came in, the girls were prepared to liſten to the debate. So we ſhall all be diſappointed, if you are reſolved to force us off the ſubject.

Miſs Supple. Yes, Sir, indeed. Papa was ſpeaking about Mr. Whitbread's motion, when you rapped.

Mr. Tremaine. Ma'am, I am all compliance. But what have I more to ſay? You know, Sir, full as much of my mind as can be agreeable to you already.

Archdeacon. You do not then, Mr. Tremaine, find any thing, in the ſentiments he delivered upon that occaſion, calculated to revive your former high opinion of Mr. Pitt; and you no longer conſider him as diſtinguiſhed by a more than mortal combination of rectitude, wiſdom and benevolence.

Mr.

Mr. Tremaine. Oh, no human creature, I conceive, is bound by the old ſpell—But I ſhall very bluntly obſerve, ſince you inſiſt upon my ideas, that the miniſter in that ſpeech paſſes ſentence upon himſelf, and fully juſtifies my friend Ruggles in having aſked him—"Whether he receives any ſatis-"faction from a conduct ſimilar to that of the "dog in the manger, doing nothing himſelf, "and not permitting any other perſon to be "active."

Miſs Supple. Dear me! Mr. Pitt—I never will believe it—one who utters ſuch charming ſentiments, and diſcovers ſuch tender feelings!

Mrs. Supple. Who has been ſo exemplary from his youth upwards!

Mrs. Winifred Supple. Who condeſcends to think of the poor and lowly, when he has ſuch grand affairs to manage!

Archdeacon. For my part, I muſt needs ſay my couſin reminds me of what I have ſometimes thought—that whenever an ingenious gentleman wiſhes to ſhew his talent, he ſhould ſet to find fault.

Mr. Tremaine. I did not undertake to argue againſt wit. I will only venture to ſay that the cruel impolicy of our poor-laws has been made clear above theſe twenty years by writers of the very firſt authority. And—

Archdeacon. But when ideas are confined to books, you know.

Mr. Tremaine. Whoſe fault, pray, is it, when ideas are confined to books, after their public utility is acknowledged? And, though I think ſomething effective muſt be immediately brought forward now, the biographer of Mr. Pitt will often have occaſion to aſk himſelf, how many degrees nearer *doing talking* is than *writing*—I was however going to ſay that the majority of thinking and obſerving men—thoſe who put not their truſt in the dead letter of an author, till they have carefully conſulted the book of life—have long been agreed, that theſe laws while they burden the rich, keep the poor indolent, improvident, profligate and miſerable. Why then has Mr. Pitt ſuffered this conviction to lie fallow for one whole generation?

Archdeacon. Conſider, my dear Sir, for every thing there is a ſeaſon—Had not the war intervened, he would beyond queſtion, ere this, have gone as far as juſtice and prudence warranted.

Mr. Tremaine. So, he put off this trivial concern, leſt he ſhould languiſh for want of ſomething to do, during thoſe fifteen years of peace, which he promiſed us within much leſs than fifteen months of the beginning of the war.—But this is not the worſt—He had not even the materials of a ſyſtem to ſeek: they were drawn together and ſquared and framed, as he owns, "in the long and glorious "reign of queen Elizabeth." And if fools afterwards heaped rubbiſh upon the workmanſhip, what hindered its removal? Little labour

labour and leſs contrivance was requiſite. And ſuppoſing the miniſter could not find time himſelf, is he really ſo little qualified for his place as not to know where to look for a ſubſtitute, equal to ſuch a taſk? A wiſe general, I believe, will always carry the firſt ſuccour to the poſt, hardeſt preſſed. And how Mr. Pitt could be better employed than in an undertaking calculated to eaſe both rich and poor, and at the ſame time to add ſtrength to our reſources I cannot, for my life, imagine. You perhaps, Mr. Archdeacon, can.

Miſs Sophy Supple. Looking ſome time at the Archdeacon, who does not offer to ſpeak. I wonder what my father will ſay to this. I ſee here in the paper that Mr. Pitt does actually tell the houſe, that he agrees with judge Blackſtone in thinking the plan of queen Elizabeth excellent. Only it was ſpoiled by bad laws afterwards. Now methinks—could not theſe bad laws have been repealed? and all would have been at once as it ſhould be—But, Sir, you muſt in your own mind ſuppoſe Mr. Pitt to have had ſome good reaſon, though it may not appear, for forbearing ſo long to make a ſimple alteration, like this, which was only to put things on their old footing.

Mr. Tremaine. Perfectly good ones, Sophy; and thoſe pretty nearly the following. Before the war, there was one univerſal ferment of ſpeculation from Berwick upon Tweed to the Land's End. Not a ſoul, who had money

or

or credit, but was on the ſpur after canals, or dabbling in banks, or buildings, or ſome choice ſcheme to get rich without regular induſtry.—Do not you remember, Sir, our journey in 1791; when at one place we could not get a chaiſe to proceed, nor at another a room to ſtop in, becauſe both were occupied by ſubſcribers to projected navigations; you found out then that we were degenerating apace into a nation of gamblers.

Archdeacon. True, but how does that make for your point?

Mr. Tremaine. Thus—This worſe than ſouth-ſea rage of adventure—when the wreck of paper-credit was perhaps deſirable to prevent the wreck of morals—the miniſter called a ſtate of unexampled proſperity. Trade was, in fact, ſo overdriven that the workman eaſily found employment. But in the hurry who looked to the general condition of poor families? The miniſter would not ſpoil his revenue harangues by diſcloſing it, if he had even troubled himſelf ſo far as to enquire about it, and found it but ſo, ſo.—When the bankruptcies and war arrived, innumerable families were reduced, if not ruined; and labourers were diſcharged in ſhoals. The men, to be ſure, had the choice to ſtarve or inliſt. Either way, aggravated diſtreſs was the lot of wife and child; which, as misfortune ſeldom comes alone, various cauſes have concurred to enhance. The poor-rates, between legal levies and benevolences, grew daily higher; and the horrors of famine into the

the bargain ſtared us in the face. The grievances of the poor now reached and alarmed the ſuperior orders. And the miniſter, who was at liberty to be quiet before, began to feel that the public expected ſomething from him. If the nature of things, which from what I have ſeen with my own eyes I think impoſſible, ſhould permit the buſineſs to lie over, no blame can ever attach to the charming man—See his ſpeech of February 13, 1796—in which, that he may omit nothing to quiet tender conſciences, he tells you drily that "the repreſentations of the labourer's "comparatively miſerable ſituation in our day "are exaggerated——

Archdeacon. Yes, and proves it too. You muſt allow that he has fairly ſet aſide the concluſion of a noted calculating divine, who laboured hard all his life to work his countrymen by addition and ſubtraction into a bad opinion of the times in which they lived. But, thank Heaven, he laboured in vain.

Mr. Tremaine. I think the obſervation both ingenious and juſt. But, obſerve, it applies only to one man, or rather to a ſingle proportion aſſigned by that man, as the rate for increaſe of miſery. This, by the by, is the common mode of defending a bad cauſe. If one argument on the other ſide be overcharged, the error is detected, and, by ſuppoſition, the reſt of the proofs go for nothing. In a controverſy, reſpecting the introduction of the Inquiſition into a certain Catholic country, an over-zealous adverſary aſſerted that pitch

was

was put into the pile, deſtined to burn heretics. A diſciple of St. Dominic proved that nothing but fair unſophiſticated wood was uſed; and behold! the holy tribunal forthwith acquitted of cruelty.

Archdeacon. Waving all elſe I *could* urge, I am convinced by the ſilence of oppoſition that prejudice carries you into refinement upon calumny—When did Sheridan, or Grey—when did he ſpare the miniſter? and if they are not able to raiſe any ſpecious objections to a meaſure, do not they endeavour to rob him of the credit of it? But not one objection of this kind was inſinuated, and my life upon the iſſue, he will ſet about to do glorious things for the poor; and make the country ring again with his praiſes, in ſpite, I had almoſt ſaid, of detractors.

Mr. Tremaine. Truly, as to oppoſition, were I to give a broad gueſs, I ſhould ſay that they were overwhelmed by ſurprize to hear him reſume a ſtyle, which he ſeemed to have diſcarded.—If good enſue, I ſhall ſincerely rejoice. But when I conſider Mr. Pitt in relation to that good, it appears to me that he put it off to the laſt moment. And if, in preſent preſſure of affairs, he ſhould find time to do what ought long ſince to have been done, he will deprive himſelf of the poor abuſed excuſe: 'My dear diſtreſſed brethren, I ſhould have waited upon you long ſince, if I had not been prevented by indiſpenſible engagements!' Had he attempted to introduce the very meaſures, enumerated in his

his ſpeech, eight or ten years ago, in what reſpect would the enterprize have diſplayed more vigour of genius than the adoption of the Telegraph? I am ſure the miſchiefs of our poor-laws had been as maturely proved by experience, as the advantages of that ingenious machine. Take down your Adam Smith, and refer, I intreat you, to the middle of the firſt volume, where you will find him aſſerting that 'there is ſcarce a poor man in England of 40 years of age, who has not been moſt cruelly oppreſſed by the law of ſettlements.' The miniſter's ſpeech, you will ſee, does not contain an idea on this ſubject that is not in the book; and I defy any of his advocates to aſſign a good reaſon, why a man, pretending to liberal principles, ſhould have delayed till now to move the repeal of that abominable law: a law which even Burn had deſcribed as putting it in the power of a pariſh officer to impriſon a man for life; and which held the Engliſh peaſantry in a ſtate of villenage, with this diſadvantage beyond common ſerfs, that whereas they are fully bound to the clod in reſidence, the clod is not fully bound to them in ſupport; for pariſh allowance never comes ſo ſoon as want, and when it does come, it does not drive want away. How prejudicial this ſyſtem has proved by obſtructing the free circulation of induſtry, you——

Archdeacon. Mr. Tremaine, I muſt take leave to inform you, Sir, that I hold it as an infringement of duty to liſten in ſilence to

any man, who ſpeaks thus irreverently of the inſtitutions of our anceſtors. What if this or that ſtatute be attended by partial and trifling inconveniences? Do they entitle us to ſet up for judges of that, to which the ſubject has ſimply to yield obedience? Shall this be our juſtification for contributing to remove thoſe reſtraints of opinion, which prevent the ſwiniſh multitude from riſing in a maſs, and trampling down all the fences of law, morality and religion. Diſcuſſion, let me apprize you, Sir——

Mr. Tremaine, riſing; Solvuntur tabulæ. Admonition in a certain tone, I have ever obſerved to be the ſignal of a faſt approaching anger-ſtorm. I have too mean an opinion of my logic to think of diſputing with a man, who has the advantage of being in a paſſion.

Mrs. and Miſſes Supple. Advantage!

Mr. Tremaine. Yes, Ladies, advantage. There are no arguments, however ſharp or weighty, againſt which anger does not ſhield the underſtanding. Pray, did any of you ever know a perſon convinced when he was in a pet? (The Ladies ſmile).

Archdeacon—a little more compoſed. Thus it is, you ſee. Minds too haughty to admit obvious concluſions from plain premiſes, are obliged to have recourſe to ſubtlety and witticiſms.

CHAP-

CHAPTER IX.

λογες ανΐ' αλφιλων

How bleſt the land, whoſe ſons are fed
With honied words in place of bread!

IN conſidering the multiplicity of our charitable inſtitutions, I have often wondered that *a ſociety for aſcertaining the general condition of the poor* had never been formed in this iſland. Information might be procured with great eaſe, and if it were well digeſted into annual reports, the mad ſchemes, upon which the force of ſociety has been uniformly waſted, would ceaſe, by degrees, to delude the imagination of its members; and knowledge would ſoon generate a ſpirit of humanity, too active and diſcerning to be content with thoſe occaſional contributions, which have much more effect in ſatisfying the vanity of the rich than the hunger of the poor. Our ignorance of the condition of our fellow citizens compleatly verifies the proverbial ſaying. Few have conſidered, and hardly any one has preſumed to determine, how many among us have from time to time exiſted in a ſtate of ill health and continued pain, becauſe they had not wherewithal to appeaſe the daily and univerſal neceſſities of their nature.

The moſt valuable information lies out of the high road of popular reading. It is diſperſed in medical publications, particularly ſuch as treat of epidemic diſeaſes. In general, indeed, it is ſufficient to enter a poor habitation to become acquainted with the ſituation of the inhabitants. The practitioner of medicine, however, ſeems to have ſome title to be conſidered as more ſagacious than the pariſh-officer or magiſtrate in diſcerning the relation between the habit of body and mode of living. But I have no wiſh to ſet aſide the authority of any party; the whole of the evidence, though not colluſively given, coinciding, as far as I am able to find, in every circumſtance.

The fate of the tiller of the ground ſeems almoſt every where the ſame. As if huſbandry rendered the human animal peculiarly vicious, he is doomed to the greateſt hardſhips and the moſt ſcanty allowance. It is the caſe in the Eaſt Indies and in the provinces of the Turkiſh empire. The meagre aſpect and premature old age of the peaſants of chriſtendom declare that they are not exempt from the ſame lot. Within theſe few years, the labourers of a certain German diſtrict actually carried into execution the propoſal which Eve, in a moment of deſpair, ſuggeſts to Adam:

> If care of our deſcent perplex us moſt,
> Which muſt be born to certain woe—
> —— —— —— —— in thy power
> It lies, yet ere conception, to prevent
> The race unbleſt——————

This

This idea, as medical men well know, is familiar among the Engliſh poor; I ſhall quote an authority below to prove that they practiſe methods for preventing increaſe of offspring, and the tranquillity with which they commonly ſee their children die, is a feeling, derived from the ſame ſource.

When either the demands of the ſtate or the number of thoſe individuals who, for any return they make, might as well be maintained in an iſland by themſelves, conſiderably and ſuddenly increaſe, the poor are in imminent danger of being over-worked or underfed. For the extraordinary ſupply required can come only from the profits of labour. Within the laſt 40 years, both theſe circumſtances have happened in Great Britain. As to taxes, there is no queſtion; and, not to mention other cauſes, the unfortunate nature of our connexion with the Eaſt Indies, has alone immenſely added to the number of our unproductive and unreturning conſumers.

Before the commencement of the preſent war, as is, I think, agreed by all that have publiſhed their obſervations on the ſubject, the indigent had gradually become more neceſſitous. It ſeems further atteſted by ſenator and magiſtrate, parſon and pariſh-officer, that the huſbandman, in particular, was reduced to a ſhorter allowance of the produce of his own hands. The reduction is manifeſt in the following articles: Few labourers brew ſmall-beer; fewer keep pig or chick, to ſay nothing of cow or ſheep; and few can allow

allow to their houſehold a morſel of meat. 'Few poor families, ſays Mr. Davies, can 'afford themſelves more than 1lb. of meat 'weekly.'—(*Labourer's caſe*, p. 19. 1795.) In many places the greaſy water, in which the parents' bit of fleſh has been boiled, is the beſt ſauce they can procure for the children's potatoes; nor can this always be had.

In Ireland poor people have enough to diſtend the ſtomach, but the diet is too meagre to ſupport health. In England the fare is little better with ſhorter commons. Mr. Pitt's objection to Dr. Price's comparative ſtatement goes upon the ſuppoſition that the poor are reduced to live on the potatoe, which is not ſufficient to afford nouriſhment in our climate. It follows too, from this obſervation, that they muſt be pinched beyond the example of former times in fuel and cloathing; for theſe articles, however eſſential, rank after food; and where option is neceſſary, food will be preferred. From a variety of places in Berkſhire, Cornwall, Denbighſhire, Derbyſhire, Durham, Glouceſterſhire, Hampſhire, Lancaſhire, Merionethſhire, Norfolk, Northamptonſhire, Somerſetſhire, Surrey, Suſſex, Weſtmoreland, and Yorkſhire, minute accounts of earnings and expenditure have been collected; and in almoſt every inſtance, it appears that families conſiſting of the ordinary number of heads are unable to procure the neceſſaries to health and life. Concerning Devonſhire, we have the following particulars from the late benevolent J. Acland, (*Anſwer*

to

to King. 1795.) 'By the time the husband-man has been married three years, if he should be unfortunate in the number of his children, it is scarce in his power by the united efforts of frugality and labour, to maintain them without parochial aid. Ever since I can remember (near 60 years) he received the same white splendid piece of metal for his labour that he now does, though it would then have procured him three times as many of the common necessaries of life as it will at present.' Mr. Acland's catalogue of old prices may serve as the poor man's negative bill of fare. Wheat 3s. 6d; barley 1s. 6d; oats 7d. or 8d. the bushel. Bacon *now* 9d, *then* 4d—coarse pieces of beef *now* above 3d, *then* 1d. the pound. A bullock's head with the root of the tongue *now* 2s, *then* 10d. Butter *then* 3½d, in 1795 13d—household cheese *now* 3½d. *then* 1d. the pound. 'House-rent, molasses, shoes and other articles are likewise very greatly advanced.' These particulars develope the grand secret, how the peasantry (those that perish in the seasoning excepted) have contrived to exist with little increase of wages or none. They likewise demonstrate an immense increase in the consumption or waste of the superior orders.

The progressive increase of the poor's-rates cannot with any probability be attributed to mere increase of population; and we hear not unfrequently of inventions, that acknowledge no other parent than extreme want. On the 17 Feb. 1796, seven labourers were charged before

before N. Conant, Eſq. with having robbed divers farmers near Farnham Royal, Bucks, of ſheep, pigs, poultry and corn. They had been in this practice for near three years. The property ſtolen was generally conſumed in their own families, or ſold to a baker who ſerved them with bread.

The condition of the country is not put to ſhame by that of the town, nor has the cellar cauſe for exulting over the cottage. If the peaſant's offspring be pinched, that of the artiſan cannot be ſaid to be pampered. The wages of mechanic labour are not indeed inadequate to the purchaſe of the firſt neceſſaries; but the nature of the employment and the defect of inſtruction prevent their application to this purpoſe. The manufacturer quits his laborious and unwholeſome occupation in ſearch of repoſe, breathing-room and refreſhment. In the latter article, he eaſily overſteps the bounds of temperance; the habit of indulgence gains upon him, he at length ſinks into entire brutality, and his groſſeſt appetite receives its regular gratification, at the expence of food to his family.

I ſhall ſay nothing of the peſtilence that ſo frequently viſits the cotton works; of the palſy contracted during the fabrication of certain metallic toys; of the extenſive ravages which the natural ſmall-pox is ſtill ſuffered to commit, or of the fevers which, like the fires of Veſta, eternally rage among the poor of ſome manufacturing towns. Theſe partial grievances will undoubtedly be remedied, whenever

whenever they ſhall engage the attention of a miniſter, who underſtands human nature, and makes a good uſe of his knowledge. But I confine myſelf to what is general and conſtant.

Reſpecting the ravages which want and vice occaſion in the metropolis, every reader of novels muſt have acquired ſome idea. But the intenſity of the evil rather than its extent is to be gathered from thoſe noveliſts, who, like Fielding, copied from life. Dr. Goldſmith calculates that in his time 2000 perſons died annually of hunger in London. But no author has told how many thouſands are cut off by diſeaſes, ariſing from defect of proper nouriſhment. The young are moſt liable to ſuffer from this cauſe; and concerning them the teſtimony of a phyſician, who writes without political views will, I ſuppoſe, ſatisfy the reader:

'London is fatal to infants in general. On a compariſon of charity children ſent to be nurſed in the environs with thoſe nurſed in town, the loſs in town being 39 was only 29 in the ſame number and time in the country. But if this loſs is great altogether, it is tremendous among the loweſt claſs, the mothers being almoſt always obliged to labour for their bread, and often even robbed by their huſbands, have no time left to take the care neceſſary for the rearing of infants; ſo that they are often left to wallow in the dirt notwithſtanding the general diſpoſition to cleanlineſs in this country, and can never receive that exerciſe or purity of the air, which is requiſite; nor can their food be at all attended to. Add to this, a pernicious practice of continuing to give them ſuck for two or three years, by which they hope to *prevent their having charge of many children*..... From all theſe cauſes, the loſs of children in London is *more than one half*, before they attain the fifth year of their age. (Dr. Fordyce Tranſ. of a Med. Soc. 1793.)

At Edinburgh, at Mancheſter, and in other great towns, ſhoals of wretches crowd together in garrets and cellars. Hence "new "poiſons," according to the probable opinion of Mr. Hunter, "are riſing up every day." It is certain that contagions are generated and preſerved, which every hour are conſuming the poor, and occaſionally make the rich their prey. A low fever which raged at Carliſle about ſixteen years ago, is known to have ariſen from this ſource. A number of miſerable families crowded into one houſe. To diminiſh the window tax "they blocked up "every avenue of light* with which even "wretchedneſs could diſpenſe."

I have before me the publication of a phyſician, accuſtomed to exerciſe his art among manufacturers†. Like many other medical publications, it is capable of affording excellent materials towards a work which ſhould be the counterpart to Mr. George Chalmers' *Eſtimate of the comparative ſtrength of Great Britain during the preſent and four preceding reigns.* The eſtimate laborioufly traces the increaſe of Britiſh tonnage. Its counterpart ſhould enquire into the feelings of individuals during the ſame period. If this inveſtigation were conducted with accuracy, we ſhould diſcover what regard the *tonnage-teſt* merits from thoſe who deſire to take the

* See Dr. Heyſham's account of this epidemic diſorder.

† Dr. Ferriar's Medical Hiſtories, I. xx, 1792. II. 1795.

ſtock

ſtock of public happineſs. I have not at preſent leiſure for an undertaking of ſo much reſearch; but I will give my reader a taſte of Mancheſter proſperity, while trade was briſker than at any former æra.

'The degree of miſery, exiſting even in manufacturing towns, is only to be credited by thoſe who have witneſſed it..... In all unhealthy ſeaſons and times of public diſtreſs, the poorer members of the community are moſt deeply injured and moſt eaſily affected by the cauſes of diſeaſe. All the methods of guarding againſt infection, or of deſtroying it where it has once entered, are to a certain degree expenſive, and require beſides an activity not to be expected from the SULLEN INDOLENCE of the poor.—(I. 241.)

'The mean lodging-houſes, in the outſkirts of the town, are the principal ſources of febrile contagion. Some of theſe are old houſes, compoſed of very ſmall rooms, into each of which three, four, or more people are crowded to eat and ſleep, and frequently to work. As ſoon as one poor creature dies, or is driven out of his cell, he is replaced by another generally from the country, who ſoon feels in his turn the conſequences of breathing infected air. During all this time, the maſter of the houſe is totally regardleſs of the miſery before his eyes, while he and his family remain untouched, and it requires ſome exertion to produce any attention to cleanlineſs or ventilation.

'The latter object indeed can be very imperfectly attained in many of theſe houſes, when they are ſituated in dark courts, or blind alleys. In moſt of theſe places, lodgers are received. The conſequence is a *perpetual* ſucceſſion of fever patients in them. In other parts of the town, the lodging houſes are new, and not yet thoroughly dirty, but in theſe the upper ſtory is laid into one room, directly under the tiles, pierced through both by the ſun and wind. In this room eight or ten people often lodge, and as the beds almoſt touch one another, the contagion of fever, once introduced, can hardly be prevented from ſpreading. But it is chiefly in old houſes, confined in narrow paſſages, that contagion is produced. ..... The cuſtom of inhabiting cellars alſo tends to promote both the origin and preſervation of febrile infection. (I. 136.)

'Other permanent cauſes of the production of contagion are want of proper food and cloathing, ſleeping on the floor of a damp cellar, with few or no bed-clothes, and *the conſtant action of depreſſing paſſions on the mind.* Theſe cauſes alſo increaſe the danger of the diſeaſe. I have ſeen patients in agonies of deſpair on finding themſelves overwhelmed with filth, and abandoned by every one who could do them any ſervice; and after ſuch emotions I have ſeldom found any recover. (I. 139.)

'That the poor perpetuate animal poiſons cannot be doubted. When a fever either ariſes, or is introduced into the houſe of a poor perſon, every circumſtance favouring its progreſs, it generally attacks the family in ſucceſſion: the cloaths and the woollen and cotton parts of the furniture become infected, retain the infection tenaciouſly, and are capable of communicating the diſeaſe for a long time. Theſe they can neither afford to purify or deſtroy. Thus their dwellings and perſons continually breathe contagion; and where this is the ſituation, not one of one family only, but of *a very great number*, it is hardly poſſible to prevent the communication of the diſeaſe to the families of the rich, among whom it would never have been produced. (II. 192.)

It would be unfair not to obſerve that the following paſſage is taken from the deſcription of a fever that prevailed in 1794 and 1795. It has however no particular connection with that date.

'In many inſtances I have found that for three or four days before the appearance of typhus in a family, conſiſting of ſeveral children, they had ſubſiſted on little more than cold water. Many of thoſe perſons were ſtrangers, and not entitled to, or unable to obtain, the pittance afforded by the poor laws. Even when that relief could be procured, it was very inadequate to the wants of a numerous family. Thoſe who are accuſtomed to affluence and eaſe, would ſhudder at the idea of ſupporting a ſickly mother, encumbered with the charge of four or five infants, on an income of two ſhillings a week. This however is the parochial allowance in caſes of illneſs. The pain and horror of theſe ſituations were often

often greatly aggravated by the confinement of the patients in ſmall, dark cellars, where five or ſix miſerable creatures ſometimes lay ill together in the hotteſt weather; where the dead remained for whole days by the ſide of the ſurvivors, and where delirium and inſenſibility were ſtates to be envied.' (II. 192.)

A little below there occurs a caſe correſponding to Mr. Acland's huſbandman whoſe family increaſes quickly:

'A young couple live very happily, till the woman is confined by her firſt lying-in. The ceſſation of her employment then produces a deficiency in their income at a time when expences unavoidably increaſe: ſhe therefore wants many comforts, and even the indulgencies neceſſary to her ſituation. She becomes ſickly, droops, and at laſt is laid up by a fever or pneumonic complaint: the child dwindles, and frequently dies. The huſband, unable to hire a nurſe, gives up moſt of his time to attendance on wife and child; his wages are reduced to a trifle; vexation and want render him at leaſt diſeaſed; and the whole family ſometimes periſhes, from the want of a ſmall, timely ſupply, which their future induſtry would have amply repaid to the public. If ſuch miſery occurs, even when the maſter of a family is induſtrious and ſober, it is eaſy to imagine the diſtreſs of ſome unfortunate creatures, who depend on a brutal debauchee. The injuries which defenceleſs women undergo in thoſe ſituations are too horrible for deſcription: I have met with inſtances of incurable diſeaſes, occaſioned by kicks or blows from the huſband in his paroxyſms of drunkenneſs. (P. 207.)

Not many months ago, we heard Mr. Pitt triumphantly exclaiming, 'It is the proud and happy conſolation of this country, that it has been the firſt to ſtand in the breach and to ſtem a torrent, which went to deſtroy all moral order and to wreck all ſocial happineſs,' (29 Oct. 1795.) The preceding quotations go to the point of *ſocial happineſs*. The *moral* order,

P. 197, l. 22, for *foundations* read *fountains*.

order, with which it is accompanied, appears in the face of day, and may be ſufficiently underſtood without domiciliary viſits, or accumulation of authorities.

'One of the ſtrongeſt temptations to brutal debauchery is the conſciouſneſs of being unnoticed or contemned. In manufacturing towns, where the youth of both ſexes are early able to ſupport themſelves by their own labour, and where the nature of their own employment produces a conſtant intercourſe between them, licentiouſneſs of manners is carried to the higheſt pitch'..... Here 'the workman after leaving the warehouſe waſtes his evening in the ale-houſe, or ſtrolls about the ſtreets and fields to a late hour for the purpoſe of intrigue.' (Ferriar. II. 203—6.)

So much for Mancheſter. And Birmingham, Birmingham, thou that perſecuteſt ſcience and integrity! were one of thy ſons to depoſe the ſame things concerning thee, ſay if he would be guilty of bearing falſe witneſs againſt his neighbours?—Similar ſcenes are exhibited in every other large and active ſeat of trade. They occur equally to thoſe who purſue their vocation through the rounds of penury in towns leſs buſy and populous.

'Among the poor children of Derby, who are fed by gruel, or gruel and old milk, *hundreds* are ſtarved into the ſcrophula, and either periſh, or live in a ſtate of wretched debility.' 'The ſcrophula,' obſerves the ſame great phyſician, 'is very frequent amongſt the children of the poor in large towns, who are in general *ill fed*, *ill lodged*, and *ill clothed*; and who are further weakened by eating much ſalt with their ſcanty meal of vegetable food, which is ſeldom of better quality than water gruel with a little coarſe bread in it.' (Dr. Darwin Zoonomia, II. 27 & 117.)

To theſe local I ſhall add two general teſtimonies; both from political optimiſts—the firſt,

firſt, wondrous wiſe in the conceit of ſome other people, and particularly in his own—the ſecond, remarkable for having become an oracle among his countrymen, after being ſuſpected, to his ſixtieth year, of labouring under the infirmity of an incoercible imagination.

'It is not eaſy, ſays the former, to calculate the numbers who die in the camp or the battle more than would periſh from want or from vice in the hamlet or city. It is ſome conſolation, that the induſtrious are too wealthy and independent to covet the pittance of the ſoldier; or to court the dangers of the ſailor.'—*But how could their induſtry avail thoſe mechanics, maſons, and joiners, who in the ſpring of* 1793 *were diſmiſſed from innumerable work ſhops, and ſtill unfiniſhed houſes?*—Though the forſaken lover or reſtleſs vagrant may have looked for refuge in the army or the fleet, it may admit of ſome doubt how far the giving proper employment to both, may not have freed their pariſhes from diſquietude or from burdens. It is the *expences* more than the *ſlaughter* of modern war, which debilitate every community.' *(Chalmers's Eſt. of the Strength of Great Britain, 4to. p.* 142*)*

This paſſage, in the edition of 1794, has been mitigated by the ſubſtitution of the word *crimes* for *burdens*, and by other alterations. Goldſmith had endeavoured to perſuade mankind into abſolute indifference reſpecting the form of government under which they lived. His poetic exhibition of national characters pleaſed univerſally, but the philoſophy of the *Traveller* made few proſelytes. The more modern ſpeculator launches far beyond Goldſmith. But he will hardly convince us that it is of little ſignification to the labouring claſſes, whether a ſtate be at peace or war. Mr. Chalmers will offend plain ſenſe by

by his flagitious doctrine, as much as refined taſte by his clumſy and inflated ſtyle.——My ſecond authority is Mr. Burke—a man of a very differently framed mind, and of whom one would fain hope, that, like Albany in *Cæcilia*, he may be diſordered by exceſs of ſympathy.

'Monks, he aſſerts, are as uſefully employed as if they worked from dawn to dark in the innumerable, ſervile, degrading, unſeemly, unmanly, and often moſt *unwholeſome and peſtiferous* occupations, to which by the ſocial œconomy ſo many wretches are inevitably doomed. ..... I ſhould be infinitely more inclined forcibly to reſcue them from their miſerable induſtry, than violently to diſturb the tranquil repoſe of monaſtic quietude. Humanity, and perhaps policy, might better juſtify me in the one than the other..... I am ſure no conſideration, except the neceſſity of ſubmitting to the yoke of luxury can juſtify the toleration of ſuch trades and employments in a well-regulated ſtate.' (*Reflections, p.* 237.)

It is extraordinary that this ſagacious politician, after tracing the trinkets, manufactured at the demand of faſhion, from the workſhop of the mechanic to the temples of Diſſipation, and detecting their pernicious influence as well on the wearer as the maker, could think of no preventive more efficacious than the ſenſeleſs expedient of ſumptuary ſtatutes. Why did he not employ his faſcinating eloquence to reſcue mankind from the *deſpotiſm of fancy?* Is it not the ſole effectual remedy for an evil he deems ſo crying, to ſet public opinion againſt that frivolous ſpirit, which can be pleaſed with toys, more elaborately wrought indeed, but not more valuable in the eſtimation of reaſon, than the glaſs-beads that catch the eye of the ignorant African?

A comparative view of *high life with low* by ſo maſterly a hand would have convinced his countrymen, that there is no occaſion to fetch and carry, acroſs the Atlantic, examples of miſery to melt over. Sugar is not the only luxury moiſtened with human tears, or ſpotted with human blood. Let the dreſs and equipage of a birth-day lady be analyſed. Let the proceſſes by which they have been wrought into ſplendour be brought before the imagination. Give an unexaggerated repreſentation of the diſpoſition contracted in our crouded manufactories—the ſavage debauchery of the men—the loſs of every ſemblance of feminine modeſty in the women—the initiation of the children in the nomenclature and theory of vices they are phyſically incapable of practiſing—the irreclaimable depravity of all. Beſide this diſguſtful and afflicting picture, place the ſcenes, in which the workmanſhip of 10,000 labourers of luxury comes into *uſe:* and it will require no oracle to pronounce whether the conſumer gains what the artificer loſes in happineſs. We may judge either as men by morality, or as Chriſtians by the ſacred books; we ſhall reſt in the ſame concluſion, provided we be not among thoſe Chriſtians, who ſpeak meekly and kindly, as if to entitle themſelves to act proudly and unmercifully. But it will be ſaid that much as humanity is to be cheriſhed and the precepts of religion to be reſpected, proſperity of trade is the one thing needful. Be it ſo. The argument will ſtand on this ground. Proſperity of trade would

be moſt compleatly ſecured by enabling a whole people to purchaſe largely of the productions of induſtry. Were no man, woman, or child in Great Britain obliged to go in rags, the home conſumption of our laborious fellow-citizens would be more profitable than the cuſtom of all the nobility and gentry of Europe. It ſhould be added that mechanical occupations are wholeſome very nearly in proportion to the utility of their productions. The fabrication of articles for mere ſhew being almoſt univerſally incompatible with the

——mens ſana in corpore ſano.

CHAP-

CHAPTER X.

Of Mr. Pitt's ſupporters—the original—the ſecondary ſet. Manner of coaleſcing with theſe—their influence.

Misfortune makes a man acquainted with ſtrange companions.—

1. IN our two univerſities there exiſts a ſect, the ſecret meaning of whoſe obſervances may one day give riſe to as many ingenious ſpeculations as the Eleuſinian myſteries themſelves. Theſe philoſophers are known by the Greek appellation θραυσοκλασται. The denomination is taken from a ſort of criſis to which they are ſubject. During this criſis no article fabricated by the potter or the glaſsman is ſafe within their reach. They daſh glaſſes, bottles, plates, and diſhes againſt the ground, and violently aſſault windows with projectiles. I have myſelf ſeen the diſciples of this ſect battering an old wall with bottles full of Burgundy. In their more furious paroxyſms they fall foul of objects not ſo eaſy to be demoliſhed. Even oak doors have given way under their percuſſions.

One very diſtinct diviſion of Mr. Pitt's ſupporters conſiſts of his Cambridge friends. He was ſeen ſurrounded by a groupe of them, when firſt

He leaped in glory forth.

But I do not find that many of the ſect above-mentioned belong to this diviſion. I have been told that he and his ſelect companions looked down upon them, as perſons equally narrow in conception and contemptible in conduct. The opinion of contemporaries confirmed this arrogation of ſuperiority. But I will by no means vouch, that poſterity, judging of both by what they have helped to deſtroy and what to make whole, will find cauſe in their works for preferring 'theſe choice and maſter ſpirits of the age' to the unpretending *brittle-breakers*.

I ſay not this as doubting the ſincerity of the band of Cambridge patriots. I believe they iſſued from college with intentions as pure as Don Quixote himſelf. If they have not righted many wrongs, repreſſed a multitude of iniquities, or improved the ſocial happineſs of the world, their want of ſucceſs muſt be attributed to thoſe *hallucinations* of perception, which too often bring evil iſſues out of good purpoſes. There is one whoſe efforts in a noble cauſe diſtinguiſh him above his fellows. I ſpeak of Mr. Wilberforce, a man not remiſs in collecting, or dull in apprehending, or ſlow in combining ideas after his manner. In his endeavours to effect the abolition

abolition of the ſlave-trade, he has laid up for himſelf a ſtock of conſolation againſt that hour of calamity, which his miſtakes in an affair of much nearer concern are helping to bring rapidly forward. The day is not perhaps far diſtant when his reaſon and feelings (for I ſuppoſe him ſtill conſcientious and candid) will declare as ſtrongly againſt the military meaſures of Mr. Pitt, as they formerly did againſt thoſe of Lord North. In tracing back the train of his thoughts, he will probably diſcover that his expectations all failed and his calculations turned out erroneous. At that moment, I deem Mr. Wilberforce capable of forming a generous reſolution and giving at leaſt a meritorious, if not a ſalutary, example. I ſhall not be ſurprized if he ſhould ſtep forth and acknowledge to the public. "It is no light matter to have ſtaked the life "of thouſands and the fortune of millions "againſt impoſſibility. He who has com- "mitted one capital ſeries of political errors, "ſhould deem this a ſufficient experiment of "his capacity. Indeed, *to prevent by every legal "exertion, a man who has once ſtood in this "predicament from approaching the ark of the "ſtate again*, ought to be engraved as a rule "of ſelf-preſervation on the heart of every "inhabitant of a free country. On this con- "ſideration, I ſolemnly renounce for ever the "function of a legiſlator, and reſolve hence- "forth to practiſe the virtues of a chriſtian in "penitential retirement."

2. Half

2. Half Mr. Pitt's early ſpeeches conſiſted of invectives againſt that miniſter, who had exerted all his ſtrength to daſh above an hundred thouſand human beings to pieces againſt the adamantine ſhield of American liberty. It muſt ſtill be remembered with what indignant ardour of patriotiſm he abjured aſſociation with Lord North. It might have been ſuppoſed that the ſame principle would keep him for ever aloof from thoſe who had been Lord North's moſt active coadjutors, or, what is worſe, his ſecret directors. But it is a vulgar error to imagine that *Principle* is ſo very unreaſonable a deity. Principle among men, who depend for a livelihood upon getting into office, does not require hecatombs, but is well contented with a ſingle victim, and muſt often put up with the cheap oblation of vows.

There were abundant reaſons for joſtling Lord North both before and after the coalition. *Before*, he was tottering on his baſe, and a majority of the people deſired his overthrow. *After*, he was a declared rival, and he who diſplaces a rival, makes room for himſelf. There were equally cogent reaſons, both prudential and pious, for dealing leſs ſternly with others. It is very commendable and chriſtianlike to ſet bounds to your hatred. And if certain perſons had uſeful abilities to let, why not engage them? Their future ſervices might atone for their paſt failures. Experience is a great matter.

Why

Why may not the practitioner in politics be eſtimated after the ſame rule as the practitioner in medicine? A young phyſician, freſh from the ſchools, reconnoitres the enemy with which he has to contend. He preſumes upon ſucceſs. The event proves he has miſtaken his own ſtrength and the ſtrength of the enemy. However he profits by his overſights; till at length by dint of deſtroying, he learns to ſave.

3. The manner, in which ſome of Lord North's comrades were received into Mr. Pitt's alliance will not be overlooked by the accurate obſerver of his political progreſs. One particular perſon has been characterized as 'the early object of his political, nay, his hereditary hatred.' In the beginning of his career, he was forward to diſclaim all connection with this obnoxious perſon. 'He generally, in high tone, diſavowed all intimacy with the right honourable gentleman, who has been long ſuſpected of an undue influence in the councils of this country. But all this was the language of a period when momentary popularity ſet him above the degradation of ſuch a connection. When the ſcene began to change, when the Iriſh propoſitions excited alarm, when the right honourable gentleman began to feel himſelf weak and inſecure, his language was leſs inflated. His proud rejection of obnoxious characters was heard no more.' (Commons' Debates, May 12, 1785.)

Among

Among thoſe who conducted the buſineſs of the ſtate in cordial co-operation with Lord North, there are ſome who have not figured as inſignificant champions beſide Mr. Pitt. They have ſometimes diſplayed proweſs ſuperior to their leader. Mr. Dundas and Mr. Jenkinſon, for example, do not ſerve merely to fill up the ranks. Our Æneas cannot rate the one as his Gyas and the other as his Cloanthus: no meaſure, I believe, which *he* ſupported and *they* oppoſed having been carried into effect.

CHAPTER XI. AND LAST.

Attempt to ſolve the problem.

He has faults: but they are faults that have nothing in them to extinguiſh the fire of great virtues. In thoſe faults, there is no mixture of deceit, of hypocriſy, of pride, of complectional deſpotiſm, or want of feeling for the diſtreſſes of mankind.——*Mr. Burke deſcribing Mr. Fox by negation of a competitor's qualities.*

A GOOD man matched againſt Adverſity preſents, according to the bold conception of Seneca, a ſpectacle worthy of the divinity. This philoſophic courtier was in a ſituation to learn that the ſtruggle between virtue and proſperous ambition is not leſs arduous. Either ſpectacle, to be fully enjoyed, requires the attributes of deity. Faculties for immediate intuition of the ſcene have been denied to man. We may diſcern the iſſue, but not the varying fortune, of the internal conflict. The fluctuation of idea, the reciprocation of ſentiment, the ſwell and ſubſidence of the ſoul are loſt to human obſervers. We muſt compare, recollect and imagine before we can make the progreſſive operation of motives preſent to our mind. Yet in ſpite of this diſadvantage, moral ſpeculation is the

moſt engaging employment of our powers. Nor is there perhaps to be found an underſtanding, ſufficiently mature to be aware that *men act with views*, which does not habitually impute definite intentions to the perſons, moſt conſpicuous within its ſphere of contemplation.

The rules for philoſophizing in this department of caſuiſtry have not yet been fixed by the authority of a Newton. But no attribution of purpoſes can, I think, be deemed valid, unleſs the following conditions be fulfilled. 1. The motives aſcribed ſhould be ſuch as are confeſſed actually to exiſt—and 2. ſuch as are adequate to the effect. 3. If they be likewiſe known to influence perſons ſimilarly ſituated, the computation will derive ſome confirmation from analogy. 4. They ſhould be deduced from a number of concurring circumſtances; and they ſhould be at leaſt not incompatible with other obſcure or unimportant circumſtances. The ideas or ſenſations that prompt each ſingle movement are not to be ſpecified by the agent himſelf, much leſs by a ſpectator. It is related of Pope, that he never drank tea without a ſtratagem; and the late Lord Camden, I have heard, uſed to ſay of a celebrated contemporary judge that he never gave an opinion from pure principle. But theſe aſſertions were not intended for literal acceptation. No poet's invention can be equal to a conſtant ſucceſſion

of

of petty ſchemes; nor will the evidence in every cauſe afford ſcope for the ſubtlety of a double-tongued lawyer.

There has always exiſted a very curious impediment to the reception of any ſober opinion concerning a Britiſh miniſter during the firſt part, and indeed during almoſt the whole, of his official term.—The people are conſtantly looking forward, with Jewiſh eagerneſs, to the appearance of a political Meſſiah.——And ſo far is experience from correcting this expectation, that diſappointment ſeems to increaſe the ardour of hope. This would undoubtedly be the moſt ridiculous, if it were not the moſt pernicious, of human follies. Under our own obſervation, the dazzling glories of Chatham and the mild virtues of North have paſſed away without relief of the diſtreſſed, inſtruction of the ignorant, or humanization of the brutal. 'No matter: in theſe caſes there was a miſapprehenſion. But, behold the deliverer at laſt! We cannot be deceived in their divine ſucceſſor. *Hic Marcellus erit.*' Thus it was. A pleaſing dream ſuſpended the powers of ſenſe and reflection. An univerſal emulation of blind faith commenced. The inhabitant of Wapping, Cheapſide, and St. James's took it for granted that Mr. Pitt was inſpired with a tenderneſs for their reſpective welfare, which they felt not for the welfare of each other. They might continue to purſue gain at one moment, and pleaſure at another; the new

paragon of patriotiſm would act as if his moral compoſition had no alloy of human infirmity. They were ſelfiſh, he was ſelf-denying. 'Wherever his proſperity or that of his relations was inconſiſtent with the proſperity of the whole, it was, even in his own choice, to give way.' He joined ſtoical rectitude to that benevolence, which the rigid Zeno baniſhed from his doctrine, but which the benevolent Antoninus ſmuggled into his conduct. The young ſtateſman had leſs than other men of low, vulgar and groſs deſire. So much the better; ſince the deficiency was made up to him in purity and intelligence. This was prediction. What has been the reality?

Mr. Pitt embraced with ſincere zeal the cauſe of a ſuffering people. He inveighed againſt the deteſtable junto whom he found dilapidating the national property, and laviſhing the blood of his countrymen, not, as a rival pretended, becauſe he was a *being organized for ſlander*, but becauſe he held in juſt abhorrence the atrocity of that rival's proceedings. Sympathy and conviction urged him on, not merely to the reſcue of his fellow-citizens from preſent calamity, but alſo to ſecure them againſt future danger. Thus far conſcience and intereſt travelled chearfully together; and it is no wonder that he ſhould have proceeded with alacrity, ſince he was at once impelled by his ſocial and ſelfiſh feelings. But the faſter he went, the

ſooner

ſooner he would arrive at a point, where, in this mortal pilgrimage, there is far more hazard than at the *ſlough of deſpond.*

It has been the fate of thoſe who have acquired the greateſt credit by exertions in a public cauſe, moſt flagrantly to violate moral conſiſtency—

———turpiter atrum
Deſinit in piſcem mulier formoſa ſuperné.

This degeneracy, which popular favourites have exhibited ſo frequently (though ſo vainly for a warning to the incautious) is of eaſy explanation. The deſire of eminence is at firſt obſcurely felt, becauſe, if it be not entirely ſunk in the deſire of accompliſhing a good purpoſe, it is thoroughly blended with this predominant paſſion. Succeſs ſoon wins applauſe; and applauſe, ſeconded by the conſciouſneſs of deſert, begins to bring attention home to SELF. Hoſtility ſtrengthens this ſentiment; and by degrees the advocate becomes the rival of the cauſe. There doubtleſs was a time, when the hermit of Mount Hera had his whole mind abſorbed in zeal for the true and only deity. After his firſt advantages over Arabian ſuperſtition, not God only, but the apoſtle of God, came to be conſidered. In time the original order was compleatly reverſed, and God was thruſt aſide to make room for the apoſtle. Thus it is that the enthuſiaſt is perverted into the impoſtor. Thoſe who undergo this transformation may juſtly be regarded as the moſt deteſtable of malefactors.

They

They tranſcend the ordinary meaſure of ambitious guilt, inaſmuch as they mock the unhappy with falſe hopes, and add diſappointment to injuſtice.

Mr. Pitt ſeems very early to have retracted his cares within the confines of his ſelf-intereſt. His demeanour on the rejection of his attempts to introduce a more liberal ſyſtem of commercial policy demonſtrates that, however firmly he once believed himſelf born to be a martyr to patriotiſm, he compleatly failed in caſting his own nativity. He lived to be convinced that parliamentary reform, on which he reſted the very ſalvation of the people, was *not* worth the riſque of office. In theſe tranſactions there appears little magnanimity. We find meanneſs, as we proceed. He could ſtoop to advance a poſitive claim to what he knew others to have invented. His own letters and ſpeeches, compared with the reports of two parliamentary committees and the papers of Dr. Price (the financial inſtructor of a moſt ungrateful pupil), exhibit various indications of a propenſity, which would have been much more excuſable, if it had ariſen from mere vanity. Though even ſo, there would have been little to hope. For an egotiſt in private life never makes a true friend; and an egotiſt in public life will ever prove a falſe patriot.

The annals of humanity mark beforehand every candidate for power, as an object of ſuſpicion;

cion; nor will the prudent readily ſuffer a leſſon, taught by the fate of their anceſtors, to ſlip out of their minds. Diſtruſt *ſhould* make us anxiouſly watch all appearances, tending to determine the character of a miniſter's ambition. Ready however as we may be to pronounce a decided opinion, we are little curious to watch with ſcrupulous minuteneſs the motions of theſe giants, that tower over ſociety with ſuch mighty power of miſchief. Inſtead of confronting the proper perſonal data, we conclude from the real or ſuppoſed groſs reſult in two or three inſtances, in which twenty other perſons might have had, each, twenty times as much concern. This is, I believe, the reaſon. Of the thing itſelf I am more confident. The nation has very imperfectly conſidered, and ſeems not very clearly to know, the facts which are alone capable of ſerving as the foundation for a juſt opinion concerning Mr. Pitt.

To find how far the preſent miniſter has departed from the *law of his kind* in ſacrificing private partialities to public duties, let us place him for a moment beſide his father. I do not ſet up Lord Chatham for a model of political virtue, and ſtill leſs of political wiſdom. But it were unjuſt not to allow him more than a ſecretary of ſtate's ſhare both of force and generoſity of mind. He would never have made it an object to procure emoluments for a rabble of country couſins, hereditary expectants, of playfellows of his childhood and

and college connections. He had ideas too large, and too lively a ſenſe of propriety for this. His very clerks would have laughed at his pretenſions to purity, if he had exerted his influence to raiſe an incompetent brother to an important poſt. But we are grown leſs difficult. We are content to impute luck as a merit to our favourite. As this man and that and a third paced in long ſucceſſion, (like Banquo's progeny) up the ſmooth and eaſy aſcent of promotion, it was ſtill the cry of our ſympathiſing dowagers: *Dear me, what ſatisfaction it muſt afford Mr. Pitt to provide for his friends in this handſome manner!* The remark was no doubt pneumatologically juſt. But I ſubmit it to common ſenſe whether this be a becoming ſort of ſatisfaction for a man of his profeſſions. I hold it to be the moſt infallible criterion of that narrowneſs, againſt which Mr. Pitt had good reaſon to be on his guard. For his financial operations, particularly his rigid exaction of taxes, had an unavoidable tendency to bring his comprehenſion to the meaſure of an exciſeman's, and his heart to the temper of a miſer's. Signs ſoon appeared of the operation of this cauſe. In ſpeaking of the national proſperity he uſed to refer every thing to increaſe of trade and revenue—nothing to diminution of miſery or vice.

A miniſter whoſe faculties have undergone this ſpecies of depravation muſt neceſſarily loſe the inclination to ſeek, and the power to diſ-

diſtinguiſh, eminent ability. Lord Chatham poſſeſſed this talent; and it enabled him to rouſe the military genius of his country. He looked far away over the heads of his relations for the man he wanted. Hence his gun-boats were true to their appointment with the land forces. He had no lagging expeditions. Neither Dunkirk nor Quiberon bore any bloody marks of his confuſed and ill-digeſted plans. This was the merit of the father. When, I demand, has the ſon proved himſelf able to ſoar aloft and take a bird's-eye view of human affairs? In peace what has he done in compliance with the great precept—*comfort thou, comfort thou my people.* Does humanity acknowledge him as a benefactor through all her claſſes? It has already appeared that he has ſupplied none of the great deſiderata of ſociety, though ſtateſmen in other countries were ſucceſsfully buſy in ſupplying them, while he was idle. In war, I ſhall hereafter conſider what tokens he has diſcovered of a commanding and creative intellect. He had need of extraordinary reſources, when he ventured upon an enterprize, of which the difficulties might have ſtaggered Charles XII of Sweden. There was, however, around him much inventive talent (if he knew how to call it forth), and means of executing inventions beyond what any age or country has had to boaſt. The enemy challenged him to competition by reconnoitring balloons, by telegraphs, and by improvements in the uſe

and manufacture of artillery. Did Germany and England deny their ſteel? The anarchs of France found the means of fabricating ſwords at home, ſufficiently ſharp to oppoſe to thoſe of the enemy. They compelled the elements into union that they might furniſh nitre more quickly. The common materials being judged inſufficient to ſupply paper, an expedient ſoon offered itſelf, and the ſelf-ſame ſubſtance, on which you might have once read an ode in honour of the *grand monarque*, was impreſſed in a few days with a republican hymn.—I ſhall be told that to prevent the majority of the Commons from being miſled by oppoſition and a diſinclination to the war from ſpreading among the people, with ordinary official duties, demanded the talents of a great ſtateſman. It may be ſo. But then we muſt ſet down poor Lord North as a great ſtateſman, and we may conſole ourſelves with reflecting that we ſhall never have a miniſter, who will not be a great ſtateſman.

In every country where opinion has influence, there muſt be an anſwer ready for him who enquires, *What has this man done for the people?* Thus a former miniſter had to ſay that under him the judges became independent. Another, that ſome millions of debt were diſcharged, that a ſinking fund was projected, a commiſſion of accounts appointed, and a pledge given for the realization of the moſt liberal ideas on political œconomy by the repeal of certain injurious ſtatutes againſt engroſſing.

groſſing. A ſhow-liſt of popular meaſures ſeems on two accounts more eſſential to Mr. Pitt than to any of his predeceſſors. The progreſs of knowledge had been wonderfully accelerated by the events of the American war; and Mr. Pitt's whole induſtry and talents had been exerted in convincing the people, how much more was their due than he found them poſſeſſing. We have ſeen what he attempted and what he performed, while he was mindful of domeſtic parſimony and refrained from interfering with foreign ſtates. His whole ſtock in trade of patriotic projects was borrowed. Whoever had been miniſter, not leſs would have been done. Preparations to do as much were actually made by every exiſting party. More was held out in a king's ſpeech; and Mr. Pitt had incited the people to demand more.

It is curious to obſerve how the miniſter has managed to ſupply the defect of ſervices; and to keep up a ſort of character, even among thoſe who have declared againſt the ſpirit of his adminiſtration. The hiſtorian of George III, having quoted a paſſage from one of his ſpeeches againſt the ſlave-trade, adds: 'thus nobly can Mr. Pitt at times *redeem* his errors and deviations from rectitude; and ſtill preſerve a place in the eſteem of the wiſe, and affection of the good.' (iii. 362.) One would have thought that the value of ſuch a *ſcheme of redemption* had been ſufficiently proved by the experience of the world. This

nature of ours is ſaid to be compounded of oppoſite ingredients; and it muſt be confeſſed that diabolical deeds are often coupled with angelic ſpeeches. Our intelligent author had forgotten that a ſmooth tongue is the tool, upon which nine knaves out of ten depend: and that if there had been no ſuch thing as fair profeſſion, we ſhould have heard few complaints of foul practices. Yet theſe truths are fully proved by univerſal experience. They ought not to be ſuppreſſed in compliment to a firſt lord of the treaſury; and they make it evident that the aboriginal *monkey-men*, whom Horace calls *mutum et turpe pecus*, muſt have been a mighty honeſt ſet of people.

The moſt deſperate ruffian, according to Dr. Adam Smith, is ſeldom altogether deſtitute of ſympathy. A man without principle may or may not be kind of heart. A wide difference is obſervable between different robbers on the road. The highwayman in pillaging you, will ſpare or ſooth your feelings; the footpad will ſlaſh you with his cutlaſs or bring you to the ground with his bludgeon. It is ſo with men, who ruſh over right and wrong towards power. Compare Julius Cæſar with Maximilian Robeſpierre—the tyrant-demagogue of France, whoſe barbarities drove numbers to ſeek refuge in death from their own apprehenſions. To which of theſe two extremes does Mr. Pitt come the neareſt? Ambition being his principal paſſion, is benevolence or malice its uſual acceſſory? He

was

was no Cæſar once. His friends, I think, will not praiſe his clemency on occaſion of the Weſtminſter ſcrutiny. His opponents talk of the rancour he frequently diſcovers in debate. This is opinion. But if he does harbour good-will towards men, and particularly towards deſerving men, many ſplendid proofs of it ought by this day to be at hand. Mirabeau himſelf (and this is an inſtance in confirmation of A. Smith's remark) was not callous to excellence—No enlarged mind ever becomes totally ſo—He found Lagrange ſtarving at Berlin; and in pure regard for his merit, ſolicited the French miniſter, till proviſion was made for the venerable aſtronomer at Paris. When has Mr. Pitt performed the office of the good Samaritan towards genius in diſtreſs? The ſuppreſſion of his own obligations to Dr. Price, when the occaſion ſo loudly called for an acknowledgment, may vouch for his gratitude—But I beg pardon—his tutor is a biſhop; that places his gratitude beyond cavil, and obliges me to go to another ſubject.—The public health will have ſome ſhare in the meditations of the man doomed to put former miniſters to ſhame by a beneficent uſe of his means. The public health had not been totally unthought of by politicians. A reward was long ſince offered for a remedy for the ſtone. It is not a ſecret, confined to the faculty, that a remedy for conſumption would be at leaſt equally deſirable. Nay, thouſands of lives might perhaps be annually

ſaved,

ſaved, if medical men were only incited to diſcover and make known the early ſigns of this deſtructive malady, that parents might have warning in time. This is a copious topic. But as Mr. Pitt has confeſſedly done nothing for the good of the body, I proceed to enquire whether he has devoted any portion of his cares to the mind. Mr. Windham, not very long ago, aſſerted that 'there was a diſpoſition to run the diſſenters down by violence and to ſhut them out from juſtice.' (Parl. Reg. xxxiii. 18.) I know not whom Mr. Windham meant here to charge with a perſecuting ſpirit. But the miniſter certainly oppoſed the repeal of ſtatutes enacting penalties againſt the avowal of anti-trinitarian opinions. Thus much of his candour and chriſtian charity ſtands upon record. It is not generally underſtood, that the unclouded day of humanity can never ſhine, till every ſectarian feeling be extinguiſhed. But there is a kindred truth, eaſy of apprehenſion and little liable to controverſy.——Of all vices, if *drunkenneſs* be moſt pernicious to the perſon infected with it, *bigotry* is the moſt dangerous to others. I do not think it will be pretended that religious animoſity has decreaſed among us for the laſt twelve years. Friends of the miſerable! you, who preſented Mr. Pitt with your confidence, becauſe you expected he would realize your humane wiſhes, refer the influence this man has exerted upon his age to the ſtandard of your feelings; and in his *actions* try if you can diſcover—not the habit but—a few caſual ſallies of goodneſs.

Againſt the queſtioner of his great efficient abilities as a ſtateſman, the *argumentum ad verecundiam* will be thought deciſive. But popular perſuaſion will not weigh much with thoſe who recollect one ſtriking fact. We are in part identically the ſame, and for the remainder nearly correſponding in all circumſtances that regulate the judgment, with that generation which conceived ſo profound an admiration of Lord North. Were the voice of impartial ſpectators in America and the free neutral ſtates of Europe loud in Mr. Pitt's praiſe, I ſhould indeed be ſtaggered. But they, I believe, regard with an eye of wondering pity, the people who can adhere to a ſurmiſe in oppoſition to experience. He is maſter, no doubt, of great quickneſs in ſpying advantages. No man plays the game of politics ſo well. He is beyond the moſt dextrous of our theatrical managers in perceiving what will hit the taſte of the town. Theſe qualities are calculated to produce great effect at home, but very little abroad. For the moſt ſplendid exhibition muſt be loſt on perſons placed beyond a certain diſtance; and how corrupt the judgment of foreigners? Were I not apprehenſive of provoking my countrymen by twitting them ſo often with that partiality for certain unworthy favourites of which they are now aſhamed, I would here ſhew that mediocrity or cunning has a far better chance of uniting their ſuffrages than integrity or wiſdom; and that he who joins ſpecious talents

to

to craft is ſure to diſtance all competitors. It is pretty well underſtood in Britain how to turn the penny to profit and pleaſure, but we are not maſters of that chapter in *the art of growing happy and rich*, which teaches how to trace the effects of public meaſures home to our own doors. Had we a ſtateſman, ſuperior to party and capable of reducing to practice all that is juſt and uſeful in the golden volumes of Adam Smith, we ſhould be none the better for his talents. The more ingenious any piece of mechaniſm, the leſs is it likely to be admired by the uninſtructed. It muſt ever be *like people, like miniſter*.

If ſomething more than I have ſpecified above ſhould be ſtill wanting to account for Mr. Pitt's great aſcendancy, it may be allowed that he is deſtitute of no ſingle talent, which can co-exiſt with cunning. The prejudice of his deſcent was the beſt of all introductions. The quality, which raiſed and ſupports him, is his elocution. There exiſts an opinion that a wiſer age will rate the poſſeſſor of this quality but few degrees above the poſſeſſor of a well-tuned violin. This is probably extravagant—But, I think, we may adopt the moral, drawn by Dr. Bahrdt (the hereſiarch of Germany) from the effect of one of his ſermons in conciliating an unfavourable audience: 'May the young candidates, who read me, put to heart this memorable example, and meditate on the wonders *mechanical* eloquence can perform. Does not the experience of all ages evince that

far

far more depends on *delivery* than on *ſenſe?* My ſermon could never have effected ſo prodigious a change of ſentiment, if elocution were not omnipotent over the vulgar.' (Bahrdt's Leben. ii. 149. Berlin, 1790.)

To conceive fully the obligations of Britain to its heaven-born miniſter, it is neceſſary to attend to one particular more; and that is, the ſtate of the civilized world at the time of his appearance. A ſenſe of juſtice in public tranſactions began to be felt. Wholeſale robbery and murder, though committed by chriſtians and for the good of trade, alarmed tender conſciences. A diſinclination to ſubmit tamely to preſcriptive oppreſſion manifeſted itſelf; and in the deſpotic countries of Europe there appeared a growing impatience at beholding government carried on for the ſport or profit of a few. Oppoſed to the ſect of philanthropiſts ſtood an intereſted party, more eaſily rouſed as being ſuſpicious of its own title, and little likely to be ſcrupulous about the means, that might be neceſſary to ſecure its pernicious privileges or unrighteous gains. Between theſe men of well-determined motives, fluctuated numberleſs ſwarms of beings, ſuſceptible of virtue and deſirous of happineſs, but unconſcious of their cleareſt intereſts, untaught

———curvo dignoſcere rectum,

and at the mercy therefore of the firſt impoſtor, who ſhould be artful enough to arm

their paſſions againſt themſelves. The aſpect of human affairs, when reaſon firſt aſſerted her rights againſt the domination of prieſts was in many reſpects ſimilar. The lever of opinion was about to move the whole of ſociety. This community might gain, and that loſe, in liberty, as at the æra of the *reformation*. But none could eſcape great changes. And it depended on the rulers of nations whether or not they ſhould be effected by violence. A ſpirit of political piety diſpoſed numbers to receive that as a favour, to which equity gave them an incontrovertible claim. Had tythes, for example, been aboliſhed ſoon after the cloſe of the American war, that ſeries of ſins againſt the people would inſtantly have been forgiven; and the obligation would, beſides, have ſuperſeded all complaints for a quarter of a century to come. This grateful temper (which muſt daily decline and, when once loſt, will return no more) may be deſpiſed as ſervile by the ſanguine advocates for freedom; but a wiſe man at the head of affairs would have made it the inſtrument for introducing ameliorations into ſociety without civil diſtractions. There exiſted another circumſtance unpropitious to peaceful reform. Luxury and commerce had cloſely interwoven the intereſts of the rich and of the powerful. Now as every grievance is ſome privilege enjoyed by one of theſe two claſſes at the expence of the community, it was perfectly in order that they ſhould lend each other aſſiſtance and encouragement to reſiſt the juſt claims of their inferiors.

In this trying conjuncture appears Mr. Pitt, and he is literally hailed as a delegate from heaven. But whether I look to our paſt domeſtic hiſtory, or to the preſent calamitous ſituation of all Europe, I find it difficult to imagine how the world could have been worſe off, if a mere thing of earth had been in his place. Strong deſire of doing good is a great quickener of the underſtanding; and had Mr. Pitt been animated with ſuch a deſire, it would have been hard if he could not have found the means of alleviating the former, or preventing the latter, evil. A very conciſe reference to his conduct with regard to the extended claims of juſtice will make it plain why he did neither. The inconveniences, to be apprehended from change, did not alarm him into acquieſcence with the exiſting ſtate of things. No man ever exerted himſelf more to perſuade the people, that the great hazard was in delaying reform. Not content with the hiſtory of the paſt and obſervation of the preſent, he called up the horrors of futurity—horrors which were to ſpring from natural and apparent cauſes—unleſs the ſtate of parliamentary repreſentation were amended.——In ſpeaking on another popular ſubject, he deſcribed "the guilt of Britain" towards Africa as calling aloud to heaven for ſupernatural vengeance. Theſe reforms were radical: they referred to principles of political morality ſo diſtinct and excluſive that no bond, but that which

couples the diſcordant in every ſtation of life, could hold together thoſe who were at variance here. Accompliſhment of theſe capital deſigns and copartnerſhip in power with their moſt determined oppoſers were things utterly incompatible.

When it is aſked whether Mr. Pitt was ſincere in his popular and humane declarations, one perſon replies, 'yes;' another, 'no.' But a monoſyllabic anſwer is inſufficient. He ſincerely believed in the enormities of the ſlave-trade. He believed in the enormities of the American war. He believed in the ſtate of the Houſe of Commons, as the *cauſa ſine quâ non* of the long continuance of the latter, if not of its origin. He believed that ſimilar enormities would recur, unleſs the cauſe were removed. In all theſe things his faith was firm; for knowledge neceſſitated belief. Whilſt his mind was free from any oppoſing deſire, he no doubt ſincerely wiſhed the ſlave-trade aboliſhed and the repreſentation altered. He followed his conſcience, as long as his intereſt forbore to call him another way. Pattern as he was at firſt of integrity and afterwards of prudence! he diſdained to ſerve the fire of ſin without wages.

His ſincerity, taken another way, will prove equally unimpeachable. It was with him as with ten thouſand adventurers, who have thriven in the world.

Si poſſit, recte; ſi non, quocunque modo—

He wiſhed Britain, and he wiſhed Africa well; but he would not ſacrifice himſelf to projects, which however they might influence the welfare of the populace in either country, were of no conſequence to his welfare. For though the ſlave-trade and the borough-trade ſhould go on half a century longer in proſperity, he would have meat, drink, cloaths, as much money for himſelf and more for his friends. The propoſed innovations were to benefit the people; and with the people it reſted whether they would accept good wiſhes inſtead of ſervices attempted with riſque or damage to Mr. Pitt's fortune. The beggar in the fable would have gone away with a high idea of the biſhop's charity, had he valued his bleſſing at a teſter.

The conſequences of Mr. Pitt's preference of office to reform, conſtitute the moſt important part of his whole hiſtory. But they are not yet fully felt. We can perceive that there was hazard in breaking up the foundations of public opinion, and afterwards in ſuffering the iſſuing ſtream to wander at will. It had been better to direct its courſe. But to croſs it by a dam is to incur the peril of an inundation, wild enough to ſweep away all who ſhall try to confine it within bounds.

What might have been the preſent condition of England and of Europe, if Mr. Pitt had been the author of benefits to mankind, is matter of difficult and melancholy conjecture.

ture. The poor man's ſentiment would have been grateful gladneſs inſtead of ſad, patient acquieſcence. A little addition of comforts to mediocrity, a little diminution of pain from penury would have eſtabliſhed the public ſecurity for an indefinite term. No alarms would have diſturbed the banquets of opulence. Gratification of that deſire to redreſs the wrongs of Africa which the great majority among us once ſo ardently felt, might have prevented part of the evils, that have ſince afflicted Europe. So unprecedented an act of national juſtice was not incapable of generating a kindneſs of diſpoſition, ſuch as no people have yet felt. Each Briton would have felt in himſelf and perceived in his neighbour new elevation of mind. Each would have been anxious to increaſe his ſtock of generous pride. That ſpirit of conſiſtency, which produces ſo much evil and ſo much good by making one fooliſh or one honourable action the motive of another, would have enſured our perſeverance; and our virtue would have been, in all ſenſes of the term, its own reward. The ſunſhine of benevolence might have warmed the cold heart, and illuminated the gloomy mind, of the miniſter himſelf.

His trains of ideas, his motives, and his purpoſes muſt have been materially altered for the better, if he had exerted his official influence, and exerted it with ſucceſs, in behalf of the Africans. Having acquired a kind of glory abſolutely new, he would have been un-

unavoidably led to prevent the two great powers of Germany from coaleſcing to attack France; an obligation, which the voice of an admiring world would have called upon that great people to acknowledge, had they themſelves ever manifeſted a diſpoſition to forget it. The ſame ſtroke of policy would have diſarmed the internal enemies of France. No blood would have been ſpilt in foreign, and much leſs in domeſtic, hoſtilities. The throne, but not the tyrannic power, of the Bourbons, might have been entire. The prieſts and nobles, though prohibited from plundering and oppreſſing at home, had not been driven to beg their bread abroad. Innovation had flowed in with ſo gentle a tide as not to overſet an infant in its way. To Britain every thing had been reverſed. She would have had friendſhip inſtead of enmity, applauſe inſtead of condemnation from mankind. Waſhington forgetting ancient injuries, would have been the encomiaſt of Engliſh, inſtead of French magnanimity. Our income had increaſed and not our expenditure. Our continental neighbours had given employment, inſtead of death, to our manufacturers. Each ſucceeding year would have "comforted the heart" with nett cuſtoms paid into the exchequer to above 4,027,230l—the produce of the *annus mirabilis* MDCCXLII. (Chalmers, 234). No wonder the maxim that *honeſty is the beſt policy* ſhould ſtill rank among politicians as a dangerous theoretical principle. But we may hope

hope that before the end of the next century experience will have evinced the propriety of generoſity when it is gainful in the end, and coſts nothing in the beginning.

In the ſucceeding eſſay I propoſe to collate the ſeveral circumſtances calculated to ſhew how far Mr. Pitt took juſt views of the greateſt events that have ever preſented themſelves to human contemplation. It has been a time of trial for one in his ſituation—a trial of head and heart. For if a man have not a heart capable of beating high, his foreign politics in ſuch a criſis muſt be a tiſſue of bloody blunders. Before the event no Perſian Satrap could have conceived the poſſibility of the men of Marathon and Thermopylæ.

In my next Eſsay I ſhall likewiſe attempt a comparative chart of the progreſs of the reformers Pitt and Robeſpierre. My authorities ſhall be taken from their own mouths. It will be for the eye to perceive whether theſe patriots proceeded in juſt gradation, from clamour to popularity, from popularity to power, from power to excluſive claims of loyalty or civiſm for themſelves and their junto, from theſe claims to continual alarms concerning plots and ſo forth, as far as the parallel may yet be carried. It will be for the underſtanding to judge whether ſimilarity of movements betrays ſimilarity in the moving principle.

The knowledge, however, of Mr. Pitt's competency, as a peace-miniſter, is what now concerns

concerns the public. It is ſcarce in poſſibility for any belligerent power to carry on the conteſt beyond one or two campaigns more. We have therefore to determine, from a review of his conduct, how far Mr. Pitt bids fair to extricate the maſs of the people from that abyſs of calamity into which they have been plunged. The tree thou ſhalt know by its fruits—the man by his works. I have ſought in vain for any work atchieved by our premier, to which Humanity would adjudge a civic wreath. His advocates have laboured to perſuade the public that we are indebted to him for our proſperity in trade.——Praiſe has alſo been beſtowed upon him on account of the naval victory of the firſt of June. But our ſailors and our admirals, our artiſans and merchants were formed without him. Their ſkill, induſtry and valour would equally have produced their effects, if no ſuch perſon as Mr. William Pitt, junior, had exiſted. Theſe effects may with as much truth be aſcribed to poor old Shah Allum, the blind Mogul Emperor, becauſe he was in being at the ſame period. If indeed the poſſibilities of national happineſs increaſe with the value of cargoes exported, then is the inventory of our commercial wealth a monument of reproach to the miniſter; for every ſpecies of evidence conſpires to prove, that in him the only claſs, which needs help, found no helper.

FINIS.

Preparing for the Preſs,

An ESSAY

ON THE MERITS

OF

Mr. PITT,

As a WAR MINISTER.

Shame and affliction were brought upon us by the American war. Is the houſe ready to ſtand reſponſible to poſterity for a repetition of ſuch diſgraces and misfortunes?

Mr. PITT, Feb. 27, 1786.

ERRATA.

Page 23, line 3, for *bear* read *have*.

—— 27, line 6, after *rebels* inſert *like wild beaſts*.

—— 149, line 3, for *ones* read *reaſons*. And correct ſeveral other inaccuracies, ariſing from the neceſſity of ſometimes writing and correcting by ſnatches, but in no way affecting the reaſoning of any particular paſſage, or the general moral of the pamphlet.